

FENG YU JIU TIAN VOLUME 6

(Xi Lei's Winter Nightmare)

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CHAPTER 1

Everyone in the tent was shocked, after a moment, Feng Ming jumped up and stated: "Prepared the troops, we are heading back to Xi Lei."

"I already made the orders." Rong Tian looked a bit apologetic at Feng Ming: "Empress Dowager is sick, I have to return to her side. That Heaven and Earth ring..."

FM: At this time, you're still talking about the Heaven and Earth ring, going back and checking on Empress Dowager is the important thing.

Feng Ming is more sensitive today as Empress Dowager is someone close to him and is an elder. When thinking about her falling ill, his heart was in pain, similar to the feeling someone get when their parents are about to die, making him even more afraid.

FM: We have to quickly return, you are her only child.

Chiu Lan and the others were also sad and surrounded him, slightly smiling to comfort him.

CL: Duke Ming, don't worry too much, the messenger usually exaggerate their news in order to avoid full responsibility if something extreme were to happen.

"Empress Dowager probably is just unwell, there's a physician looking after her. Once she sees the Great King and Duke Ming return then perhaps her mood will lighten up and will recover naturally."

At that moment, Feng Ming settled down a bit, his face flushed still left a bit of residual color. After experiencing a moment of chaos, his head was pounding heavily that he used his fingers to rub the sides of his temples, he kind of frowned and looked up at Rong Tian: "I'm so tired."

Rong Tian reached out his arms and pulled him into his embrace, he looked over the maids in suspicion. Chiu Yue quickly brought the bowl of tea with a bit of dry leaves for mental wellness over to Rong Tian for inspection.

Rong Tian immediately understood, lightly patted Feng Ming's shoulders, softly said: "Sleep, once the horse carriage is prepared, I will carry you."

FM: Ah... (he obediently closed his eyes)

Rong Tian ordered the emergency unit to immediately pack up the tents, baggage, and prepare the carriages to head back.

The horse carriage for Feng Ming wasn't fully prepared yet when Lu Dan came to ask for audience.

Lu Dan charged into the tent and made his greeting with Rong Tian.

LD: I heard the Great King had ordered to return to Xi Lei immediately, did something happen?

RT: Adviser doesn't need to worry, after returning to Xi Lei and resolving some business, we will immediately continue our journey, but for the moment let's delay this a few days.

Lu Dan smiled and clapped his hands.

LD: If that's the case, let Lu Dan write a letter to inform my King that we will be delaying this for some time.

Lu Dan was about to leave when he glanced over at Feng Ming, who was curled up within Rong Tian's embrace.

LD: Ah...Duke Ming is sleepy at this time?

RT: Last night, he was star gazing and didn't sleep at all. Now he is tired.

It's unknown what Lu Dan saw, but he stepped a bit closer, observed carefully and then said: "Please excuse Lu Dan for being wordy, but the spell charm around Duke Ming's neck for protection is a bit bizarre, who may I asked have given that to him?"

Rong Tian was a bit tensed, but his facial expression still remained calm.

RT: It's Song Teng who wrote it for Feng Ming. The purpose is only for wellness protection.

LD: Song Teng? (Lu Dan frowned) It was rumored by the guards that Shaman Song Teng earlier today was found...

RT: You're right.

LD: Oh my! (Lu Dan's beautiful face suddenly changed color, stepped a few steps back, opened his mouth in shocked)

RT: What's wrong, Adviser?

LD: Duke Ming, he...

RT: What's wrong with Feng Ming?

Everyone's eyes were on Lu Dan.

LD: This situation is serious; Lu Dan doesn't dare to make irrational guesses. I request your Majesty to allow Lu Dan to clearly assess Duke Ming.

Lu Dan stepped forward and meticulously assessed Feng Ming.

Feng Ming's composure was still normal and was sleeping soundly within Rong Tian's arms. After finishing assessing, he reached his hand out to palpate Feng Ming's neck.

Rong Tian noticed that Lu Dan's face was increasingly grim, which made him worry without end. He reached out his hand to observe Feng Ming's breathing, and felt gentle warm breaths. He was slightly relieved and looked over at Lu Dan and asked: "What does Adviser see?"

Lu Dan was silent and shook his head, closed his eyes and looked upward, as if he was asked a very difficult question.

At that moment, a guard suddenly loudly report from outside the tent: "Your Majesty, the horse carriage is ready."

Because of Lu Dan's confused look, Rong Tian was impatient and burning inside, he growled: "Go away! If it's not something important, don't intervene!" Causing the threatened guard to quickly silence.

After a long time, Lu Dan responded: "Lu Dan had studied a bit of witchcraft, but Duke Ming's condition..."

RT: What is Adviser trying to hide from me?

LD: Lu Dan does not dare. It's just Duke Ming's condition at the moment make Lu Dan puzzled. I don't know whatever best to explain to your Majesty. According to what Lu Dan had assessed, Duke Ming right now...his soul seems as if it's gone from his body.

After finishing his words, all of the maids stood wide-eyes in shock.

RT: What nonsense is this?

LD: It's because it's impossible therefore Lu Dan didn't want to inform Your Majesty. Ever since now, for a soul to leave its body, it's a complex situation that only the powerful shaman can received. On Duke Ming's body is a powerful spell for protection that no one can break. But Lu Dan hopes to be wrong.

CL: Adviser is reckless. Duke Ming is just asleep, how can you scare us?

Chiu Yue was aware of the strange happening of Feng Ming that day, she was also just as scared as Chiu Lan. She couldn't resist but knelt down in front of Rong Tian's feet and said: "The carriage is ready, Duke Ming please wake up."

"Feng Ming, the carriage is ready, let's continue sleeping after settling inside it."

Shaking him a few times, but the person within his arms didn't have any sign of waking up, his mouth was slightly curved as if in a beautiful sleep.

CX: Duke Ming, wake up.

Feng Ming did not move an inch.

CL: If Duke Ming doesn't wake up, the Great King...he's going to leave you....Hurry and wake up, Duke Ming, Duke Ming!!

RT: Feng Ming, wake up!!

LD: Could it be? Is there really such a thing as soul leaving body, this...How could it be? Could there really be a powerful shaman like that in this world?

RT: Adviser is famous shaman of Dong Fan. I would like to ask you, for a soul to leave the body of normal person is extremely difficult, but...if that soul was not of this body, then what about that?

LD: Ah?

“What?”

Everyone in the tent couldn't believe what Rong Tian said.

LD: If a soul and body are not of the same source then it would be easier (for the soul to leave).

RT: Feng Ming, Feng Ming...(Rong Tian was terribly upset) Everyone leave and guard outside, don't let anyone enter.

After seeing everyone leave, Rong Tian said to Lu Dan: “Adviser, come here.”

“Your Majesty?”

RT: Adviser had many training, filled with experience; you must have a method to save him. Listen carefully, if he wakes up, I'll give the entire strength of Xi Lei to you...If he doesn't wake up, I want a funeral for all of Dong Fan's royalties.

LD: Your Majesty's threat towards Lu Dan is useless. Even though Dong Fan is a small kingdom, but it's not a place that Your Majesty's words of “to kill” can kill. Because Duke Ming saved me, Lu Dan will give it my all. Request Your Majesty to place Duke Ming on the mattress for Lu Dan to think of a method.

Rong Tian laid Feng Ming down.

CHAPTER 2

Lu Dan softly stepped forward, carefully assessed Feng Ming's pulse, etc.. After a long moment, Lu Dan pulled off the magic spell on Feng Ming's neck.

LD: A magic spell written in blood by a dead person is the worst spell, Duke Ming should not continue wearing this. (He paused a bit and removed a jade necklace on him) This is jade that was produced from the same place as the Heaven and Earth ring; therefore, has a lot of magical powers. Even though Duke Ming's body is not worrisome, but his soul has left it; thus, will waste energy and will be hard to prevent other evil spirits from entering.

Rong Tian examined the piece of jade to make sure that it wasn't just an ordinary jade and after noticing its warmth he gave his thanks to Lu Dan and personally placed the jade on Feng Ming to wear.

LD: The most important thing is to bring Duke Ming's soul back into his body. There are two requirements: Number one, Duke Ming's body should not be harmed, Number two..to find Duke Ming's soul.

Rong Tian frowned: "Protecting Duke Ming's body is not a problem, but how can we find his soul?"

Lu Dan hesitated a bit and finally said: "I would like to ask Your Majesty, you said earlier that this body does not belong to Duke Ming, is that true?"

That was a big secret because Feng Ming and Rong Tian, even the people closest like Lie Er and Rong Hu weren't even notified about it one word. However as of now, since Feng Ming had fallen into this situation and he can only rely on Lu Dan's promise of treating him, then this secret can no longer be kept a secret.

RT: This is a long story, one morning and one evening would be difficult to explain everything clearly for Adviser to understand. Adviser can just view this body as if it does not belong to Duke Ming, and then please just continue treating him. (Lu Dan still had something that worried him.)

LD: If that's so, then Duke Ming has the experience of entering a body. A soul usually waits at places that he has been before. According to Lu Dan's guesses, Duke Ming's soul must be wandering at the place he first entered the body. However...we don't know where that place is, right? (He sighed).

Rong Tian examined Lu Dan to see if he had any ulterior motives and then continued: "I know."

LD: What?

RT: Inner palace of Xi Lei, Crown Prince's quarter.

LD: Crown Prince's quarter? (Lu Dan happily stated) If that's the case then it's great. As long as we return to the inner palace of Xi Lei, bring Duke Ming's soul back, perform soul possession spells then Duke Ming will wake up.

Hearing Lu Dan's jubilant tone, Rong Tian's heart beat faster as he pictured Feng Ming opening his big round eyes and looking at him. Rong Tian forcefully slapped his thighs and stood straight up.

RT: I will order the whole troops to begin the departure, traveling day and nights to return to the palace in haste.

LD: Your Majesty, please hold on. Duke Ming's body cannot be moved, a soul will return to where it leaves. If something were to happen along the way, wouldn't it have negative effect on Duke Ming? (Rong Tian frowned)

RT: Does that mean that I have to send somebody to bring Duke Ming back?

This duty could have been given to Rong Hu, but Rong Hu is still busy with finding a way to save Lie Er, finding someone would be a difficult thing now.

LD: The person that can call Duke Ming back should be a relative to Duke Ming.

Rong Tian's eyebrows narrowed even more: "Feng Ming doesn't have any relatives."

LD: Then he should be the closest person to Feng Ming, the closer the relationship; the easier it is to retrieve Duke Ming's soul.

RT: If that's the case, then I can only return alone?

Lu Dan didn't not immediately replied, he just softly exhaled, saddened and continued.

LD: I also know that having Your Majesty leave Duke Ming right now is a hard thing to accept...

Rong Tian looked constantly at Feng Ming and after a long paused he replied: "I understand..."

RT: Who else is the closest to Feng Ming than me? (He turned to Lu Dan) The troops will stay here to protect Duke Ming's body. I will bring along some bodyguards to return to the palace, bringing Feng Ming's soul back, Adviser, you... (Lu Dan couldn't refused)

LD: Lu Dan will follow Your Majesty back, retrieving a soul required a shaman, Lu Dan also hopes to help out a portion.

Those words eased Rong Tian's mind, how can he possibly be at ease to leave the unconscious Feng Ming in the hands of the dangerous Lu Dan. With a face that could deceive many people on this world, Rong Tian's suspicion of Lu Dan will never be extinguish, because of that he naturally replied: "That's good, then we should immediately depart."

LD: Retrieving a soul will require a lot of precious ailments, I request Your Majesty to order your servants to prepare them ahead of time. (He handed Rong Tian a piece of paper he just finished writing).

Rong Tian noticed that the list had a lot of precious ailments, but luckily the inner palace of Xi Lei has a storage of them. Because of Feng Ming, he is willing to use them and immediately nodded his head.

RT: These things, I will have my people prepare them, Adviser just need to focus on retrieving Feng Ming's soul back.

LD: Retrieving a soul will waste a lot of inner energy, from now until then, Lu Dan will not eat meat and will focus on cultivation.

RT: Adviser wishes to eat vegetarian dishes, I will have it especially ordered. Do you have any other requests?

LD: No.

After finishing discussing everything, Rong Tian said: "Adviser should quickly prepare, in half an hour, we will begin our departure."

Pushing Lu Dan out, he ordered for Dong Ling and relay duties to him.

RT: Lu Dan will follow me back, you have to keep an eye on your guards. Other than Chiu Lan and the other maids, you cannot allow anyone else to enter the tent. Anyone who enters without permission and bothers Feng Ming, you are to capture them for later punishment.

The news of Feng Ming's soul leaving the body, only a handful of those who were present in the tent knew about it; therefore, when Dong Ling saw that Feng Ming lying on the mattress tired, he couldn't help but be curious: "Duke Ming is sick? Do we need to send for the physician?"

RT: It's just a common cold, nothing to worry about. I have to return to check on Empress Dowager's health right now. You have to carefully follow through, don't let anything happen.

DL: Understood.

After Dong Ling left, he send for Chiu Lan and the rest to come, without waiting for Rong Tian to say a thing, all four of them kneel down. Chiu Lan's eyes were red.

CL: Please rest assure, Your Majesty, if anything happens to Duke Ming, just punished us first. We will not leave this place at all, no matter who that person is, we will not allow anyone to touch a single hair of Duke Ming.

RT: That's right. That was something I wanted to tell you all. Carefully serve him, as long as Feng Ming wakes up, I will reward all of you. Stand up.

Rong Tian walked back and forth and stopped next to Feng Ming. Unable to control himself, he reached out and stroked Feng Ming's face. Smooth skin, how can anyone know that the soul has left this body? This heart was as if sliced by knives.

Rong Tian thought for awhile, as if something wrong was about to play out, like to bid farewell. He called only Chiu Lan forth and carefully advised her.

RT: Lu Dan's words, I cannot trust all of it, however with Feng Ming like this, I cannot not believe them. Feng Ming has thousands of soldiers/guards outside to protect, and all of you inside here, as well as Rong Hu and Lie Er, who will return, perhaps Lu Dan will not dare to play any tricks. But, if anything happens...for the worst, you have to risk your life to protect Feng Ming. Seven kilometers away from Aman River, there is a small village, location hidden, it's a place where Mei Ji resided. If you experienced any danger, you can come to request help from her. She will respect me and help save Feng Ming. (He pulled out a map that Mei Ji gave him before she left)

Moved by Mei Ji's affection, Rong Tian always carried with him that map. But because he was afraid that Feng Ming would be jealous, he never dare utter a single word about it to him. There were many times when he almost exposed it while stripping during heavy passion, but fortunately Feng Ming was clueless. He also never searched Rong Tian's robes; therefore, he was able to hide it until now.

Holding the map in his hands, he remembered feeling scared that Feng Ming will discover it and due to jealousy start a huge fight.

If Feng Ming could wake up right now, then don't even mention of starting a huge argument, even tearing apart the inner palace of Xi Lei would be nothing.

Chiu Lan received it and carefully hid it. Rong Tian still wanted to look at Feng Ming some more, he gently whispered: "Feng Ming, I will come back, very soon." Walking closed to the entrance, he suddenly stopped.

RT: Cai Qing?

Not guessing that Rong Tian will call on her, Cai Qing replied in shock: "Your servant is here."

RT: You also come out, follow me.

CQ: Yes?

RT: What? You don't agree?

CQ: Understood. Your servant understood.

Rong Tian brought Cai Qing, along with Lu Dan and a few hundred guards to return back to Xi Lei.

Around 30 kilometers ahead in the distance, they saw a group of people on horses heading towards their direction, with flags of Xi Lei.

The person leading the group was Tong Er.

"Your Majesty!" Tong Er saw Rong Tian, both happy and scared, pulled in the reigns and came in front of him, shouted out: "Are you returning to visit Empress Dowager? We send a messenger to give you the news but did not hear any reply about your movement. Since we were worried that something happened, there was an immediate order to chase after and find out what happened."

RT: How is Empress Dowager?

TE: She is better, just missing Your Majesty. (Tong Er's eyes looked at Rong Tian with strange brightness, he couldn't stop giggling). I also know that my trip is wasted effort. With Your Majesty here, why is the troops number different? It's just, why did Your Majesty received the news, but is now returning back in a rush?

Rong Tian didn't want to mention about Feng Ming's situation and just replied: "I just received the news tonight and is now returning."

TE: How is that possible? Your Majesty left for three days and Empress Dowager didn't feel well inside, we also immediately send the news to Your Majesty. The messenger was personally sent by me, according to the day of departure, Your Majesty should have received the news three days ago.

Rong Tian's face immediately turned pale.

RT: Something's not right. That messenger must have been switched, I'm afraid it's a spy.

Everyone was shocked.

TE: Empress Dowager's health is better, I'm just afraid Your Majesty has to be careful at this time. Let Tong Er and Your Majesty return to the campsite and take care of this spy.

Rong Tian was currently in a hurry to return to the palace to retrieve Feng Ming's soul, how can he turn around the horses even knowing that having a spy is not a small thing. The most important thing is that Feng Ming's body is at the campsite and if the spy along with their enemies were to play tricks, causing harm to Feng Ming then what should happen?

He was burning inside, but his face did not express any emotion, instead he just calmly smiled and said: "Just a minor nuisance, what can he do? I will continue to head back to the palace to visit Empress Dowager." He coldly called out: "Tong Er!"

TE: Yes!

RT: I will leave you with responsibility to investigate, immediately return to the main campsite, along with Head bodyguard Dong Ling to take care of the matter. Captured the messenger and strictly interrogate, captured those who are involved and do not spare those who made contact with him. Make sure everything is secured surrounding the troops.

TE: Tong Er received Your Majesty's order! (He shouted out and then frowned. He asked again.) Your Majesty is really not coming with Tong Er?

RT: I have other important business. Campsite matter is urgent, you better hurry.

Rong Tian rushes back to the palace.

Please the gods up in heaven, I beg you to look after Xi Lei Duke Ming of mine

CHAPTER 3

Days and nights on the road, the horses continued towards the palace without resting. All of the horses were covered in dirt and sand, everyone's faces were covered to point that you can't see who they are.

General Tong Jian Min heard the news and quickly ran forth, asked in surprise.

TJM: Why has Your Majesty returned in a rush? Tong Er just chased after you to tell you that Empress Dowager's health has improved; therefore, had left personally with a group of soldiers. Could it be that you didn't meet him along the way?

RT: I did, I send him to the campsite. (He paused for a bit, then quickly walked and asked) Is Empress Dowager's health any better?

TJM: (quickly walked along) It's a lot better. She no longer need to drink medicine since yesterday and is able to leave the bed to roam around the garden. Your Majesty, where are you quickly heading to?

RT: The prince's quarter.

Entering the prince's quarter, everything was the same. Without the presence of the royal maids, the prince's quarter only have the lower maids who were in charge of sweeping the area. Seeing the sudden presence of the Great King, they were shocked and quickly kneeled down to greet him.

Opening the door into the room, he looked inside and everywhere had an image of Feng Ming causing Rong Tian to unable to hold back his emotions.

RT: Feng Ming, I came to take you away.

However, all four direction was silent, no one there to answer. Rong Tian continued calling out until a female voice answered from behind.

CQ: Your Majesty, in order to retrieve a soul, a shaman has to be present.

Cai Qing followed Rong Tian back to the palace. Because she sat inside the horse carriage and was constantly moving about, her face was a bit slimmer and thinner quite so.

During Feng Ming's incident, beside him were his closest maids, only Cai Qing is a new attendant. Because of this, it made Rong Tian suspicious; therefore, he didn't want her to stay with Feng Ming and purposely ordered her to follow.

RT: You're right. (He loudly called out to the guards outside) Please invite Adviser Lu Dan in here, all the things that he needs, I already advise Tong Jian Min, who will later bring them.

The guard received the order and quickly ran off.

Cai Qing poured a cup of tea for Rong Tian, but before he could drink it, the guard came back and reported: "Your Majesty, Adviser Lu Dan is dead!"

RT: What? (his face suddenly turned pale).

The cup in Cai Qing's hands fell down and broke into pieces.

Rong Tian stepped back two steps and held onto something to help stand him up. He wanted to carefully interrogate, but Tong Jian Min pushes the door in, his forehead filled with cold sweat.

TJM: Jian Min recently heard of Adviser Lu Dan's incident and had examined the body. Although Lu Dan is dead, the dead person is not Lu Dan.

Rong Tian seems to regain his mind and emotions, sat on a chair and continued.

RT: What is the exact situation? Explain everything to me in details!

TJM: Your Majesty, that person has the same appearance as Lu Dan, same outfit, but wore a strange mask of unknown source. That person committed suicide by drinking poison, black blood dripped down his mouth, causing the mask to wrinkle. Therefore, Jian Min concluded that that person was not Lu Dan. (TJM handed the mask over) This is the mask I tore from that person, I request Your Majesty to examine it.

Rong Tian just tore up the mask and looked sharply at the guard that is trembling under his feet.

RT: Could it be that none of you carefully notice whether the person inside the carriage was really Lu Dan? Was it before the journey that the trip occurred or during the journey that he disappeared?

“Your Majesty already strictly ordered, Adviser Lu Dan returning to the palace will use a lot of energy and need to cultivate and rest. No one is allowed to bother. Along the road, even the food tray we only left it on the outside of the carriage for him, who would dare to check the skin on his face to see if it’s real or not.

Rong Tian couldn’t utter another word.

From the beginning Lu Dan had began his scheme, and even proposed to Rong Tian to return to the palace, something that he can’t believe, Lu Dan will escape during the trip. That scheme, only reaching the city will it be discovered. This thought made Rong Tian feel that he had quite a loss.

However, Rong Tian thought about it again. Did Lu Dan waste that much effort just to runaway? But if he didn’t runaway, was there another motive?

RT: Could it be Feng Ming? (Rong Tian’s gaze was like a savage animal that was hurt)

Everyone in the room saw the threatening aura surrounding Rong Tian and no one dare to say anything.

RT: *Let’s say Lu Dan is not here, what kind of tricks would he be up to?* (Rong Tian tried to calmly analyze this) *Dong Ling and Tong Er know that there’s a spy within the group, they will secure the area carefully. There are thousands of soldiers protecting Feng Ming, also the loyal maids, and Rong Hu, Lie Er who will be returning...*

Rong Tian then looked over at Cai Qing.

RT: Cai Qing, what is your relationship with Lu Dan?

Cai Qing’s face was even paler than a dead person. Just after hearing news of Lu Dan’s death, she was flustered to the point of dropping the cup as if hit by lightning. Now hearing the powerful interrogation tone of voice of Rong Tian, her weak body couldn’t help but tremble in fright.

CQ: Nothing....nothing...

RT: Nothing? (Rong Tian glared frightfully) Tong Jian Min.

TJM: Yes.

RT: Quickly send this order, within the campsite, there’s a baby boy by the name of Cai Jiang, bring his head to me.

CQ: Your Majesty, please don't! (Because she was so afraid, she crawled over and held onto Rong Tian's leg) Your Majesty, many times please don't! Your servant will answer, just hope that Your Majesty can spare Cai Jiang.

RT: Spill it!

CQ: That one time when Chiu Lan tried to cook the recipe from Dong Fan chef, don't know why Adviser Lu Dan knew about it. While cooking, Chiu Lan asked me to find her a bowl of fresh blood. At that time, Adviser Lu Dan called out to me and gave me a bowl of fresh blood. He told me to bring it back to Chiu Lan to put in the food.

Up above echoed the sound of Rong Tian gritting his teeth.

RT: You are a royal maid beside Duke Ming, but dare to bring another kingdom's item and put it in Duke Ming's food? If Lu Dan put poison, would Feng Ming even survive? Because of this one incident, I could kill your entire family!

Cai Qing forcefully shook her head.

CQ: That blood, your servant had tested it with needle to test poison. Chiu Lan also tested it. Because it didn't have any poison therefore was put into Duke Ming's food.

RT: You idiot! Even if it wasn't poison, you cannot bring food of unknown source for Feng Ming to eat! Lu Dan might not put poison, but he could have put magic spell. *Song Teng's unknown death might have connection with that strange bowl of blood.*

Trying to control his frustration, Rong Tian continued to ask: "What did Lu Dan gave you in exchange?"

Cai Qing hesitated a bit.

CQ: Adviser said, he can retrieve a person's soul, so...

RT: Nonsense!

It seems like Feng Ming didn't had his soul taken away but was only unconscious because of what Lu Dan had given him to eat. He was angry at Lu Dan for meticulously planning every detail. First, he got Feng Ming to eat the food causing him to be energized, then causing Feng Ming to be unconscious, and the matter of Song Teng's mysterious death, creating a mysterious surrounding and adding in the fact of retrieving Feng Ming's soul, making Rong Tian believe his every word and thus, eventually got tricked by Lu Dan.

Thinking through, Rong Tian was slightly relieved to understand that Feng Ming is just unconscious and that his soul hasn't left his body. Perhaps when he left the morning afterward, Feng Ming could have waken up.

But, why did Lu Dan had to use much effort to separate him from Feng Ming?

Even if Lu Dan brought an army at Yong Yin, he won't have the ability to bring the troops to attack the campsite and kidnap Feng Ming?

Cai Qing still didn't stop crying beneath his leg, the more Rong Tian saw it the more angry he was.

RT: You band together with him to harm Duke Ming, this crime cannot be forgiven, in reason your whole family should be killed; it's a pity that your son is still young. On behalf of Feng Ming, I will spare his little life. Someone, drag this servant outside. Have someone carry this order; bring Cai Jiang here – his whole life in servitude.

Cai Qing knew she would sooner or later die, two guards carry each of her arms and dragged her away, but after hearing Rong Tian's last few words, she yelled out and pushed the two guards aside. Once again she held onto Rong Tian's leg and screamed out.

CQ: Your Majesty, Cai Jiang is still young, please spare him!

RT: I already spare his life.

The guards quickly tried to drag her out, but she continued to grab hold of Rong Tian's leg.

CQ: You can't treat Cai Jiang like that! He is Duke Ming's son! He is the son of Crown Prince An He!

Rong Tian looked down at Cai Qing and softly asked.

RT: Cai Jiang is the son of An He?

CQ: Yes.

RT: Then...does An He know about this?

CQ: He... (she pressed her lips) He knows. He treated me very well, every time he wanted to see me, he would have to sneak off without anyone knowing because he was afraid that others might know and I might be bothered. When I was pregnant, he was very happy, he wanted to give me a better, easier life, waiting for the day that Cai Jiang is born. (As if she is reliving the old happy memories, a smile appeared on her face) An He, I'm afraid that before Cai Jiang was born, he already...

Rong Tian's face turned pale, his eyes stared at Cai Qing.

RT: The one who reported that the Crown Prince was possessed was you?

CQ: You're right, it was me. After I gave birth to Cai Jiang and was able to return to the Prince's quarter, I was hoping to be hugged by him. But he...he completely changed; he stood in front of me and did not recognize who I was. I knew he was not him. The same appearance, the same body, but he was not him, he was another person! Your Majesty! You've been tricked! He is not the Crown Prince An He, he is just an evil spirit that possessed the Prince, he taken over the body. He...he's the one that killed Crown Prince An He!!!

Rong Tian pulled Cai Qing away from him.

RT: So it was you that spread the rumor that Feng Ming's possession, allowing Lu Dan to take advantage of the situation. If that's so, you not only helped Lu Dan put blood in the food, you

were planning on using Lu Dan's power to expel Feng Ming's soul and retrieve An He's back. No wonder after you heard of Lu Dan's death, the cup in your hands fell down. Lu Dan was just using you. From the start, he was never planning on retrieving An He's soul back!!

He forcefully kicked Cai Qing once causing her to fall over onto the floor.

CQ: He took advantage of me, he told me as long as I follow his words, Cai Jiang's father will come back...

Rong Tian felt that something was wrong the more he thought about it.

If Lu Dan already knew about the soul possession, then the assassin wearing the magic spells must have been sent by him with the sole purpose of causing disturbance of witchcraft within Rong Tian and Feng Ming's minds.

When Lu Dan came to borrow food supply, he must have come up with this evil scheme earlier. Borrowing food supply is fake, using Heaven and Earth ring to lure the confined Feng Ming is real.

Rong Tian kept thinking that there must be another purpose as well.

RT: If An He was intimate with a female servant and was about to become a father, then why did he wanted to jump into the lake to commit suicide? When An He was retrieved from the lake, other than the physician and maids, who else was there?

Tong Jian Min knew what Rong Tian was thinking, his face turned pale when Rong Tian's attention turned to him.

TJM: It seems...to be Tong Er!

RT: Tong Er? Tong Er usually looks down on An He, why when An He fell into the water, he was so worried?

TJM: Tong Er deserves death; it was him that pushed An He into the water! The day before An He was the titled Crown Prince of Xi Lei, as long as An He dies, Tong Er will be next in line.

If this matter is something Lu Dan also knew, then he must have persuaded Tong Er to side with him, which isn't completely impossible. When Tong Er comes to the campsite and finds the spy, he will also take advantage of the situation. Thinking about that, Rong Tian kicked opens the front door and shouted out: "Someone! Prepare the troops, follow me back to the campsite!"

Lu Dan slipped through his fingers, eyeing Feng Ming like a hungry tiger. The whole campsite troops are protecting Feng Ming, however at this time they are all within the hands of Tong Er.

Danger...

CHAPTER 4

Rong Tian again traveled back to the campsite without stopping. At the border of Yong Yin, Rong Tian regrouped with Rong Hu and Lie Er. They informed him that Feng Ming had disappeared, when asked what happened, Rong Hu answered.

RH: Several days ago when I brought Lie Er and 5000 solders back, we thought that we only need to regroup and immediately continue our journey. However, we couldn't believe that when we came to the campsite, everything was disorganized. Head bodyguard Dong Ling met with disaster, Chiu Lan, Chiu Yue, Chiu Xing were found unconscious inside Duke Ming's tent. As for Duke Ming, he disappeared. When I found out that Duke Ming was missing, I immediately requested Crown Prince Yong Yi to close off Aman River. Together with Lie Er, we continued to search for Duke Ming's presence along the riverside. But searching for close to one day two nights, we only found these. (He pulled out a baggage with items inside)

RT: Feng Ming's clothes? (There were also other everyday use items that were torn up. Rong Tian clenched his teeth) Where's Tong Er?

LE: When we saw Young Master Tong at (Dong Lin), he was already injured. Right now, he is resting his injury.

RT: He dares to stay at the campsite? Let me check up on his injury a bit.

====

"Wa..Rong Tian, let's not do horseback riding anymore, let's eat outside..wa...eating outside is better."

He heard a low laughter of a male voice and he whispered in his ears: "It's time to leave the bed, my Duke Ming."

Feng Ming opened his eyes to find Advisor Lu Dan. Not hearing Chiu Lan's response or the bickering of Chiu Yue and Chiu Xing, Feng Ming felt something was wrong with the silent surrounding so he suddenly sat up.

Lu Dan smiled, standing at the head of the bed.

FM: This isn't the tent.

LD: It isn't.

FM: I'm not within the campsite?

Lu Dan's smile deepens: "No. Duke Ming is on a boat, and this boat is cutting through a hidden part of Aman River that not many people know about, outside the scope of Xi Lei's search.

FM: Advisor, you were lying to me all along?

Unable to hide from Feng Ming's gaze fill with blame, Lu Dan's smiles deepened even more beautiful.

LD:Duke Ming was also tricked by Ruo Yan, King of Li, right? War between the two kingdoms, using schemes is a must. However, this trick of Lu Dan, can it compare to the scheme of chained boats at Aman River that made many people in the world talk about?

This wasn't the first time Feng Ming had been tricked so he was no longer afraid, he crossed his arms in front of his chest, resting himself in front of a soft pillow, and narrowed his eyebrows.

FM: I seriously don't know what scheme Advisor had used.

Lu Dan was pleased and rewarded himself a satisfied smile.

LD: After Lu Dan explained all the details, Duke Ming can discuss.

Lu Dan then began retelling his scheme.

CHAPTER 5

Lu Dan's scheme started when Dong Fan received news of rumors that within the inner palace of Xi Lei, Duke Ming is a wandered soul. They saw that Xi Lei quickly became a powerful kingdom, because of that, Advisor Lu Dan send people to infiltrate within the inner palace of Xi Lei to trace the origin of the rumors.

Due to fate, Dong Fan's spy found the existence of Cai Qing and Cai Jiang.

Cai Qing proved that Feng Ming is a wandered soul, however Lu Dan – a person who always follow every move of every kingdom's inner palace, was just like Rong Tian, from Cai Jiang's identity was able to figure out the death of An He was caused by Tong Er.

In order to take advantage of Cai Qing's involvement, Lu Dan gave her a proposal that she cannot refused, he will expel Feng Ming's soul and retrieve An He's soul back so that Cai Jiang will have his real father.

Tong Er was also afraid that his plot of harming An He that year would be discovered that he was pressured into participating with Lu Dan's plan.

And from there, the three of them: Lu Dan, Cai Qing, Tong Er, an advisor traveling thousands of miles to borrow food supply, a female maid beside Duke Ming, and a royal heir could easily enter the inner palace to form and create an impressive scheme.

FM: Cai Jiang is the son of An He? (Feng Ming only heard half of it that he already was confused with all the relationships, but the one that made an impact was the identity of Cai Jiang.)

LD: I can't believe with a body like Duke Ming, he can have a child with a female maid.

FM: Advisor still hasn't retold everything, but all the matter that happened next, I can already guess.

LD: Oh?

FM: At first, Advisor send someone to assassinate me, hidden with magical spells on his body, making Rong Tian worried that something will happen to me. And later, sending a letter with purpose of borrowing food supply. Heaven and Earth ring is Dong Fan's national treasure, can stopped any curses, Rong Tian of course knew. Because of Heaven and Earth ring, Rong Tian will definitely allow you to enter Xi Lei.

LD: Xi Lei King of yours is not a sympathetic person, he only wanted to use the opportunity to force me in order to retrieve the Heaven and Earth ring. I am Dong Fan's advisor, how can I be looked down upon? He wanted me to hand over a piece of meat, a tasty piece of meat, but in

fact it's a piece of bone, stuck to his throat that he can't swallow nor spit out. At last, he obediently hands over his beloved Duke Ming with two hands.

His eyes, they were keen and evil to the point that Feng Ming had never seen before.

FM: Advisor used many methods to lure us out of Xi Lei and test us. How Advisor tricked Rong Tian I don't know, but I believe...it's related to that headache I've been having these past days.

LD: No wonder you're Duke Ming. I knew that Chiu Lan of yours love cooking, so that dish was something I ordered my chef to cook everyday for her to see. As for the ingredient, I also purposely allow her to steal. There is just one last bit, which is to use fresh blood.

FM: I knew having a love for food will lead to disaster. I also thought that blood was not normal as well. With Cai Qing beside me, switching the bowl of fresh blood is very simple.

LD: Talking to Duke Ming is enjoyable. Cai Qing used my blood, switched with fresh blood.

FM: What? (Shouted out) Human blood?

LD: With my blood, it can cause Duke Ming to be extremely energized. The more Duke Ming is energized the more energy Shaman Song Teng had to use, of course, with outside involvement by me. In conclusion, once Song Teng's dead, Duke Ming will no longer have any method of repressing the magic curses; thus, will be unconscious.

Thinking of how Song Teng innocently died, Feng Ming felt terrible. To conclude it, he also is partly responsible.

FM: After that, what words did you used to trick Rong Tian to leave my side?

Lu Dan saw that Feng Ming was angry and that made him even more satisfied inside, he happily smiled.

LD: It's a very complicated process, in order to lure Xi Lei King away from the campsite, I had to use much effort. But after Xi Lei King left, Young Master Tong was able to reach the campsite, with his backing, I killed Dong Ling, spread anesthetic (sleeping) dust to your maids, it was as easy as finding fish in a barrel.

FM: This is called: easy as a swift of a hand. (He couldn't help his habit of lecturing people, Feng Ming naturally taught Lu Dan a few idioms) Is that so, the process is indeed complicated.

LD: I heard Duke Ming was in the inner palace of Xi Lei and had written a book of 108 strategies, chained boats is also in there. Comparing Lu Dan's scheme of luring the enemy, and your 108 strategies of Duke Ming, how about it?

FM: This scheme of Advisor, is very effective, all the other small kingdoms will definitely praise it no doubt. After this scheme of yours, Rong Tian will definitely change his attention of focus. Within the number of kingdoms he wants to defeat, Dong Fan stands out as number one. Because of that, all the other smaller kingdoms can sit still and relax. It's a headache, being ruler of the world, the order of need to defeat kingdoms is changed again.

Lu Dan's face turned from white to blue, blue to red, from red to pale white.

LD: Duke Ming just close your mouth. I have the guts to kidnap you, I will also have the guts to deal with Xi Lei Rong Tian.

FM: Oh? What plan do you have Advisor?

LD: If the rulers of the other kingdoms have a taste of Duke Ming's body for several days, how will Xi Lei King react? His beloved being forced and raped, they will no longer wish to ally with Xi Lei. Of course, they will agree to form an alliance to defend against Xi Lei. No matter how strong Xi Lei is, it would be impossible to break free of an alliance among other kingdoms.

Lu Dan stared straight at Feng Ming, waiting for that handsome face to have a change in expression.

But after a long moment, Feng Ming just opened his mouth widely and yawned.

FM: Hey, I'm hungry. (he rubbed his stomach, facing the surprised Lu Dan with his mouth wide opened and chuckled) Advisor doesn't plan on handing a dead body like me to kings of different kingdoms to rape me several days, are you? Ha, but I still want to eat that chicken dish.

CHAPTER 6

Feng Ming got the chicken dish that he wanted but then stated: "It's not as good as Chiu Lan."

Hearing the sound of teeth grinding on top of his head, Feng Ming included: "But the taste is still good. Oh..I know, must be last time Chiu Lan used your blood, don't know if this time it's fresh blood.

Lu Dan's narrow eyes stared at Feng Ming for a bit.

LD: If Duke Ming thinks that he can receive something from Lu Dan, then you've have lightly underestimated Lu Dan.

FM: You're definitely an Advisor.

He again thought: on this boat they cannot easily carry a deer to drain it's blood. Lu Dan's boat must have people to carry this every day things. They must be wandering about within the border of Yong Yin, escaping from Rong Tian's large search party to help Lu Dan. Don't know if it's second prince or third prince of Yong Yin, but no matter who it is, once Rong Tian conquers Yong Yin, I have to punish that person. He immediately shook his head, no, living with Rong Tian for so long had made Feng Ming catch the cruel aggression of him.

FM: Advisor...can I rest a bit?

LD: Isn't Duke Ming resting already?

FM: Ah, I want to be alone to close my eyes a bit.

LD: You can. (He walked outside of the room)

After seeing Lu Dan walked outside and closed the door behind him, Feng Ming began counting in his mind.

Ten...Nine...Eight...Seven...Six...Five...Four...Three...Two....One!

FM: Help me!! There's a poisonous snake! Someone wants to kill Duke Ming!!

Within seconds, the door was kicked opened and many tall, strong guards appeared but they just stood still.

LD: What's wrong? (Lu Dan came forward from behind, the guards lowered their heads and made way for him)

FM: (sat upward, slightly opening his eyes, and pretending to be clueless) Didn't Advisor said I can close my eyes for a bit? Even if there is something to discuss, there is no need to tear down the door!

LD slapped one of the guards and advised him: "Dare to be disrespectful to Duke Ming, quickly apologize."

LD: Lu Dan already treats Duke Ming with utmost hospitality, but if Duke Ming purposely causes problems, then don't blame Lu Dan for being heartless.

Lu Dan and the other guards left as they lock the door.

Feng Ming lay out on the mattress, feeling worried; he stood up and walked about the room. *Lu Dan isn't dumb enough to hand me over to all the old Kings, but what's his purpose of using much effort to kidnap me? For a reward?*

Feng Ming tried to think hard for a method to escape but couldn't think of any. Then he slowly got tired and wanted to fall asleep, but Lu Dan came in, smiling.

"Duke Ming, are you awake? Do you want to meet someone?"

CHAPTER 7

Have to see someone? Feng Ming's mind became more alert, the person that Lu Dan introduces at this time must not be an ordinary person. Meeting more people will allow more opportunity for him to understand his current situation, and an advantage for escape.

Feng Ming calculated properly however he shouldn't express his over-excitement about it. He let out a yawn.

FM: I'm already imprisoned on this boat, to survive or to die is already in the palm of Advisor's hands. There's no way I can refuse now.

His attitude was a bit harsh because Feng Ming believed that Lu Dan still has another scheme. Perhaps Lu Dan won't treat Feng Ming badly at this time so he has to take the chance to make him lose his temper.

However, Lu Dan didn't care much for Feng Ming's discontent look and replied.

LD: If Duke Ming does not want to, I will not force you. When Duke Ming has free time then meeting him will not be late.

FM: I'll...MEET! (Unfortunately, Feng Ming couldn't keep his cool like Rong Tian).

Lu Dan left the room and just a few minutes later, the door was opened. Duke Ming looked up, examined carefully at the face of that person.

"I can't believe I get to see Duke Ming again so quickly, making me overjoyed."

Feng Ming's head can't stop from pounding, his eyes wide opened as if they were about to fall off, he pressed his lips tightly and yelled out: "Where is Lie Er?"

"He's just a little servant, how can he compare with the precious Duke Ming? There's no need for me to waste my time with (someone like that)."

"Bastard!" Feng Ming was burning with rage, shouted out and stood straight up.

Can't believe because of that (amount of energy he used), he fainted.

LD: Duke Ming!

Feng Ming just felt his body was weak and Lu Dan's voice became fainter.

After waking up, Lu Dan was the only person beside him, staring down at him from the head of the bed.

LD: Duke Ming is awake? Duke Ming's body is a lot weaker than Lu Dan expected.

Feng Ming thought: what does my body have to do with you? Remembering about the person that he just met, his face turned pale: "The person that issued you this boat in Yong Yin, who is he?"

LD: Didn't Duke Ming see him already? Aren't you clear yet?

FM: Yong Yi? (he gritted his teeth)

LD: The Crown Prince had admired Duke Ming for a long time.

FM: That bastard! To Hell! Dare to trick Lie Er! (he punched the bed in anger) I will definitely make him taste a slice of my sword.

LD: That's can't be done, Crown Prince Yong Yi is my biggest supporter that helped me kidnap Duke Ming successfully this time. Without him, how can I lure your strongest bodyguard away?

FM: I have to meet Yong Yi again, have to ask everything clearly. Beg Advisor to ask him to come back here.

LD: Crown Prince Yong Yi still need to deal with Xi Lei King, there is no time to stay on the boat. Duke Ming shouldn't be impatient, if you want to meet him, you still have other opportunities to. Ah, Duke Ming is hungry right? Lu Dan has prepared the chicken dish that you love the most.

Enjoying Feng Ming's hard to look at face, Lu Dan continued to laugh and tease him: "However, I guess that Duke Ming is no longer hungry and should rest awhile longer.

He chuckled at Feng Ming and left, but before closing the door, he turned around and said to him.

LD: I forgot to tell Duke Ming, Crown Prince Yong Yi helped us with conditions. As long as the boat is in far distance of Xi Lei's troops, after leaving Yong Yin borders, Crown Prince will get to spend a lovely night with Duke Ming. Ha ha, Duke Ming rest assure, as long as Duke Ming is not outrageous, Crown Prince will most definitely be gentle and embrace Duke Ming like how he did with your close confidante. (Lu Dan laugh out loud satisfyingly, locked the room and left)

Feng Ming lay against the bed, his two hands held the pillow tightly, his eyes stared at the locked door. He later looked outside the window and wondered if Rong Tian is also staring at the sky above.

Advisor Lu Dan, this play of switching real and fake of yours is not bad, as long as he succeed, it's enough to make Xi Lei and Yong Yin stand at opposite end, also enough to destroy the relationship between Duke Ming and his confidante.

However...

FM: Out of those 11 kingdoms, the ones that are experienced with skin masks isn't a lot. But in wuxia novels, everywhere is filled with usage of masks.

Feng Ming knows his body, although it's not very strong, but it can't be emotional to the point of fainting. It must be before then; Lu Dan had touched him, causing him to faint, so he won't notice the fake Crown Prince. But he cannot guess that when Feng Ming saw Yong Yi, the first thing that came to mind was not "unfaithful bastard" but was "mask". If he could closely examine, he would have discovered the strangeness of it.

After waking up, Lu Dan also used a bunch of excuses to avoid him from seeing Yong Yi again. Lie Er is best at reading people, Feng Ming will definitely not believe that besides Rong Tian, there is another person that could make Lie Er turn about.

Finally understanding Lu Dan, that plot was a bit careless, it seems like reading those wuxia novels were useful after all.

"Oh, if I could meet my old middle school teacher again, I will definitely tell him that reading wuxia novels are useful." That year because he was reading a bunch of novels, his teacher scolded him like crazy.

Feng Ming decided to climb back to bed and sleep.

CHAPTER 8

No matter what kind of wonderful scheme it was, after discovering an error it will become a laughing matter. But since Lu Dan had put in much effort, then Duke Ming cannot disappoint and leave him a bit of face, imagine it as following along with the plan.

LD: Duke Ming's face composure is very bad. Duke Ming must really hate Lu Dan. In fact, even though Lu Dan is beautiful in appearance, but I'm filled with evil thoughts. Even Lu Dan were to explain it to Duke Ming about something called "Because of one's country, one uses beautiful appearance" then it's just forceful words, making Duke Ming think about more negative thoughts.

LD: I won't say anymore useless words. (Seeing Feng Ming's face change a bit, Lu Dan quickly changed his expression on his face and smile widely) I don't know if Duke Ming would also have the pleasure of meeting another person?

FM: (thought a bit) Again, Lu Dan must have a lot of talented people within your grasp that can change into another person. Don't know who will you put blame on which poor little kingdom this time?

A surprised look appeared on Lu Dan's face.

FM: Didn't Advisor say that Crown Prince Yong Yi will not return on the boat?

LD: Duke Ming had moved the entire world, making lots of people admire you, not just Crown Prince Yong Yi. I won't hide this from Duke Ming, those who wish Duke Ming to leave Xi Lei King are numerous in number. If Duke Ming isn't worried, Lu Dan will invite this person here.

After leaving, Duke Ming heard some commotion outside his locked door.

LD: If the Great King has feelings towards Duke Ming, we must not reveal your identity? Yesterday when Crown Prince Yong Yi met with Duke Ming, it was in person.

Another male voice whispered a few words that Feng Ming couldn't hear.

LD: What a shame, you're already a kingdom and yet still afraid that Xi Lei King will take revenge. Rest assure, Duke Ming is imprisoned here, who will know who he meets.

That same voice again said something that was unclear.

LD: If that's so, I will cover Duke Ming's eyes. But Your Majesty have to remember, I will only allow a few minutes alone for you, hopefully Your Majesty will not go overboard with Duke Ming. He is still a special guest of Dong Fan.

After hearing that, Feng Ming knew what the plan was. Lu Dan came into the room along with other guards and tied Feng Ming up and covered his eyes.

LD: Please Duke Ming ease your anger, this person is of high status that Dong Fan does not dare to go against. However, Lu Dan had warned him that he is not to do any harm to Duke Ming.

FM: You dare treat me like this? Wait until I return to Xi Lei, I will definitely make you kneel and cry before me, begging me to spare you life!

LD: Just wait until Duke Ming can come back alive to meet Xi Lei King and then we'll talk.

And so everything became black.

CHAPTER 9

Feng Ming heard footsteps coming towards him. When asked who that person was, he didn't answer. He continued to touch Feng Ming's face and Feng Ming shouted out how dare he dirtied Xi Lei Duke Ming. Finally he said that Feng Ming is a beautiful person indeed and started kissing Feng Ming's face.

Feng Ming tried to kick him, but he can't since his arms and legs are tied on to the chair and can only slide backwards. However, he hit the wall and that person continued to molest Feng Ming.

During the struggle, the person accidentally used the word "I" (used for a King), he stopped himself and referred to himself as a "young master."

Feng Ming eventually yelled out to stop and that he knows everything, they cannot trick him.

That's when Lu Dan rushed into the room to stop that person and told him to leave as he was disrespectful to Duke Ming.

Lu Dan untied Duke Ming and apologized for putting him in that situation. Feng Ming tried to act pitiful and was grateful that Lu Dan came to his rescue. Lu Dan then asked Feng Ming what he meant when he said that he knew everything.

Feng Ming replied that the person inside the room was not a young master, but a king and Lu Dan cannot trick him in thinking otherwise. Not only that but that person left behind a jade medallion that belongs to the Kingdom Zhao Bei.

LD: Lu Dan had tried to hide his identity, but unfortunately he revealed it himself. Duke Ming is just like what they say, intelligent unlike others. These days being with Duke Ming in times of danger, but yet still able to remain calm. You've made Lu Dan very impressed. Sadly...our change in boat direction will soon arrived at the borders of Yong Yin in a few days. Until then, Lu Dan cannot disregard the promise of the other kingdoms, it would be difficult to protect the wellness of Duke Ming. If I knew Duke Ming was that kind of person...

FM: What is Advisor's meaning?

LD: It's all because of Duke Ming's ability to seduce so many people, making every nobles want to grab hold of. Because of Dong Fan, Lu Dan has to use Duke Ming as a negotiation. Even if I were to regret now, the boat will reach land, how can I help Duke Ming escape from this fate. If I were to create a crime with other kingdoms nearby, how can I explain it to my King?

FM: Foreign alliance is important, but how about me, I'm Duke Ming, don't I have any value?

LD: If Duke Ming expect that we will return you to Xi Lei King and beg for Xi Lei's protection then it's impossible. Even if it's Xi Lei King, he will never spare any of us. How about Duke Ming patiently waits and obediently bears for a few more days until they are all satisfied. Once Dong Fan's army strengthened, we do not dare to cause disturbance among other kingdoms.

FM: Strengthened army? No matter how careful Advisor prepared, you are still missing a key point. This whole world, the method of strengthening an army only one person has that knowledge and that person is standing right in front of you. If Advisor truly want to give me in

exchange of foreign alliance among the other kingdoms then the next day everyone will mock Advisor for missing out on this once in lifetime opportunity of strengthening Dong Fan's military forces.

LD: Duke Ming's meaning is...

FM: I will teach you the military strategies, but you have to protect my welfare, how about it?

LD: Duke Ming is not lying to me, right? Then let us shake hands in agreement. If Duke Ming is willing to teach Dong Fan the military strategies, then one year later, Lu Dan will escort Duke Ming safely back to Xi Lei. I will even gift the Heaven and Earth ring to repay Duke Ming's kindness.

And so again, another alliance scheme...another scheme forcing Feng Ming to hand down his military strategies knowledge. Feng Ming chuckled, silently thought, just wait until this boat reaches Dong Fan's shores, and let's see how my scheme will cause the earth to shake below your feet.

CHAPTER 10

After the agreement, Feng Ming became a very special guest. But in reality nothing changed very much, he was still in the same room and ate the same meal. Every day Lu Dan would visit and would ask him intimately about the strategies.

FM: Please blame Feng Ming for not believing Advisor. The agreement of using military strategies to exchange Feng Ming's welfare, this issue once we meet Dong Fan King, we'll notify him. Either way, Feng Ming is a fish on a platter, only Advisor can see how to deal with me. As for now, it's also Advisor that can change your mind.

LD: Duke Ming's is right, let's wait until we meet Dong Fan King to continue talking.

Afterwards, Feng Ming noticed that the maid that helping put wood into the fire is of different skin color than the Dong Fan people, so he asked her about it curiously.

She replied: “Replying to Duke Ming, your servant grew up in Dong Fan, but I am not of Dong Fan, but is of Kingdom Tong.”

FM: Kingdom Tong? Isn't that a neighboring kingdom of Xi Lei? Why is a young girl far away from home and living in Dong Fan?

She tells Feng Ming that she was kidnapped and sold off to Dong Fan. She is afraid that her parents might have thought she is dead by now.

She later on brings in a bottle wine and asked if Duke Ming would like to try it, a special wine that Lu Dan usually drinks as well. Feng Ming understands and ends up drinking it. Since his alcohol tolerance is low, he ends up dizzy and falls into Lu Dan's arms when Lu Dan came to visit him. Feng Ming starts splurging out words.

FM: This wine is just like Advisor, Feng Ming cannot not drink it. Inside the mouth it's sweet, and then later you know it's strength, very good indeed. (He stood up and blew a breath of wine in Lu Dan's face, even bit his ear) Advisor is very beautiful, do you know the ancient story....? It's about a beauty scheme in the book Sun Zi. Only beautiful people like Advisor can make use of it.

After that he was unconscious. For three days, Feng Ming did not see Lu Dan and when asked, the servants just said that Lu Dan was busy. They eventually reached shore (but not the shores of Dong Fan), but is switched to horse carriage for transportation the rest of the way.

Along the way, Lu Dan asked Feng Ming about the beauty scheme, in which Feng Ming talks about his so called master “Sun Zi” and how there are two different books, etc...making Lu Dan believe every word.

Finally they reach Dong Fan's capital of Ping Xi.

CHAPTER 11

Ping Xi is the capital of Dong Fan, a place where Heaven and Earth ring is treated as a national treasure, a land of gods, therefore, everywhere is filled with that one mysterious color. The

extreme superstition of their ruler have with the gods, you only need to see all the rows of statues lined up and effort used to bring them to the walls is enough to understand a few things.

On the road, Lu Dan had always hid Feng Ming's whereabouts to prevent soldiers of Xi Lei from coming. Entering Ping Xi, the horse carriages continued onward to the inner palace. Two rows of strong guards were waiting on both sides. When they saw the carriages they immediately ran forward and said: "Your servant greets Advisor. Everything that Advisor had ordered had been prepared, however, the preparation for Duke Ming to stay with the Heaven and Earth palace, there is..." Must be something hard to say, that guard hesitated for awhile, but continued: "The Head Priestess said that Feng Ming's stay will make the gods mad. Right now, she had brought other Priestesses to stand at the doors of the Heaven and Earth palace, stating that they want to reason with Advisor."

After hearing the name Head Priestess, Lu Dan's beautiful eyes became cold.

LD: She wants to argue then let her argue. We are going to the Heaven and Earth palace. (turned around and smiled with Feng Ming, then gently said) Didn't Duke Ming want to see the Heaven and Earth ring of Dong Fan? Lu Dan had prepared Duke Ming's living space at the highest point of that Heaven and Earth palace. Since we reached the inner palace, I request Duke Ming to exit the carriage, and change to a small palanquin.

Feng Ming finally gets a glimpse of sunlight and noticed that Dong Fan is completely different than Xi Lei. There are beautiful serene melodies from afar.

LD: Duke Ming, please.

Feng Ming stepped on the palanquin and was carried into the inner palace.

Once they reached inside the inner palace and the Heaven and Earth palace, Lu Dan tells Feng Ming that rarely any guests have the honor of sleeping in that palace and Feng Ming is one of the lucky few. Lu Dan then later pulled out something and covered his face, leaving only his eyes, telling Feng Ming that he hates to have people stare at his face whenever.

Feng Ming then wondered why he wasn't like this when they were at Xi Lei. He still haven't get to see the Heaven and Earth ring when he noticed that there seem to be a bunch of people outside the door of the palace.

It was a bunch of old ladies and Lu Dan introduced Feng Ming to them. Apparently one of the ladies was the Head Priestess who didn't get along with Lu Dan so Feng Ming decided to use this opportunity to make things bigger. He praised her looks making everything shocked at his rude comment.

A certain maid behind was heard chuckling at the comment. Feng Ming then later tried to excuse his rudeness.

At that time, the guards surrounded that maid who chuckled, pulled out a white piece of silk and placed it around the maid's neck, her face changed color, Feng Ming quickly said: "Hold on! Head Priestess, it is Feng Ming that was rude, allow me to receive punishment..." Before he could finish his sentence, there was a loud yelp, Feng Ming turned his head in shock, that maid had fallen down, with the white silk still around her neck and her head mysteriously tilted down on its own – it seemed that her neck was broken.

Feng Ming turned back at the emotionless Head Priestess and couldn't hide his emotions.

FM: You group of old ladies, even towards an innocent person... (His shoulder was held back by Lu Dan).

LD: Head Priestess of Dong Fan holds a very special title, even those of nobility are not allowed to be disrespectful to her. Please restrain yourself, Duke Ming.

The body of that maid was carried away and those old women still appeared the same as if nothing happened. Even though Feng Ming was stopped by Lu Dan, he couldn't help but look at the Head Priestess with fierce eyes.

FM: Of course killing people will receive karma, I will definitely replace those gods of yours and teach you all a lesson!

HP: If you're disrespectful to the gods, you'll be hanged.

Suddenly, several guards charged forward.

LD: Stop! Head Priestess, this is Xi Lei Duke Ming of noble status, Lu Dan had used much effort to invite him from afar to come to Dong Fan. He is Dong Fan's special guest, someone who the Great King gave permission to enter the Heaven and Earth palace, you can't just hang him.

HP: Xi Lei Duke Ming? Xi Lei has a changed of ruler, what's the use of Xi Lei Duke Ming?

A sudden shock expression appeared on Feng Ming and Lu Dan's faces, making them confused.

FM: Ha?

LD: What?

FM: You're lying. (His face paled and he looked over at Lu Dan, chuckling) Don't you think that's funny? We came from Xi Lei, Rong Tian is beloved by all thousands of his people, he isn't a normal person, and how can there be an appearance of a different ruler?

Another person answered for Head Priestess: "Head Priestess never lies."

Feng Ming looked over to Lu Dan to verify the statement and Lu Dan nodded in agreement.

Without proper evidence, Head Priestess would not spill out unproven facts. Feng Ming's face turned pale and he suddenly fell backwards in disbelief, trying to inhale a bit of air, which help him came about again. Shaking his head continuously in denial: "That can't be true."

Rong Tian...what had happened?

Feng Ming was still trying to regain his emotions when Lu Dan asked for clarification.

"The news traveled here about two hours ago. Because Xi Lei King wasted much effort in searching for Duke Ming, he brought lots of soldiers to search about. Midway, the person next in line for the throne band together with General Tong Jian Min, in charge of the army, uses a scheme to attack at Yong Yin. In a midst of confusion, Rong Tian was defeated and died at Aman River. This news will be detained until after the new ruler's coronation day and then the world will be announced of it." This was answered by another woman who showed her joy at the misfortune of others.

At this time, they were in bliss not because of Rong Tian's misfortune, but of Advisor Lu Dan's, traveling thousands of miles and using much effort to bring Feng Ming here.

However, Feng Ming didn't have the mood to pay attention. Every word, every laughter of Rong Tian seemed to take control and filled his head, forming an illusion and wouldn't stop lingering beside his ears. His face was even more paler than a dead person. In a short moment, he tried

to straighten himself up for his two knees were trembling underneath as if about to fall onto the ground.

The Head Priestess did not bother to look at Feng Ming and continued on.

HP: Rong Tian is now dead, the strongest kingdom that is most threatening to Dong Fan is now no longer. Duke Ming is no longer a special guest of the Great King. Those who disrespect the gods are to be hanged.

Even when the guards grab hold of Feng Ming's arms, he did not even realize it.

FM: It can't be...This cannot be...

LD: Hold on! Even if Rong Tian is dead, you still cannot kill Duke Ming. His head is filled with rare military strategies that are Dong Fan's opportunity of rising up. If Head Priestess kills him, then you have wasted Dong Fan's precious resource. I am this Kingdom's Advisor, in charge of all this nation's affairs, who dares to kill the one I'm protecting?

His dark aura caused all the guards to freeze in place. The surrounding was filled with heavy tension.

Lu Dan is Dong Fan's Advisor, but Head Priestess had a special status, he can't go overboard. In a moment of hesitation, all eyes laid on Head Priestess.

HP: In front of Heaven and Earth palace and dare to speak such disrespectful words to the gods, it isn't a small crime. To kill or not, let the Great King decide.

Lu Dan used much effort to kidnap Feng Ming, from one moment to the next, created friction with Xi Lei and other surrounding kingdoms. Preventing Xi Lei's strength from exceeding in order to protect Dong Fan, and tricking Feng Ming in revealing the military strategies books that all the other kingdoms longed for was his plan. He tried all sorts of methods to overcome this bunch of Priestesses, but cannot imagine that he was stabbed in the back.

Destiny was hard to foresee, just like how Rong Tian was overtake by evil people eyeing for the throne. He believed that Head Priestess isn't someone that would create such lies and so Lu Dan completely trusted her words. At this point, he could only nod in acceptance.

LD: Alright. Then allow Duke Ming to follow me back. After we meet with the Great King, we'll let him decide. (Lu Dan knew that this woman would not allow Feng Ming to step a single foot inside the Heaven and Earth palace)

HP: Wait. Duke Ming cursed the gods, before the Great King make his decision, he needs to be in our confinement, how can he agree to reveal the military strategies? With the many torture devices in our place, wouldn't he tell us all without hesitation?

Lu Dan couldn't fight against that lady and had to see Duke Ming get dragged away. He couldn't help but spilled out the words: "That old hag" with his beautiful lips. Then suddenly a servant reported to him that the Great King had ordered for him.

CHAPTER 12

Feng Ming was clueless even when the guards tied him up and pushed him into the Heaven and Earth palace. He eventually regain his clear mind and told himself that Rong Tian is not weak King that can be harm by others. He mustn't lose this sight at this time.

They dragged him through the palace and entered through a secret passageway until they came upon a hidden room and within the center of the pond of water laid a mysterious rock and on top of it has a piece of greenish jade. Feng Ming thought to himself that this must be the Heaven and Earth ring of Dong Fan. He can't believe these people of this period are so smart. And that Rong Tian even wanted him to wear that on his body for half a year too.

Thinking about Rong Tian, he could not stop worrying, his chest was twitching, and his tears flow down his face. Feng Ming bit on his lips and was angry at himself: why can't I believe in Rong Tian? Worrying like this, why can't I think of a plan to escape this place and reunite with him sooner!

Feng Ming saw that the Priestesses kneel down in front of the pond and did their praying rituals. After a moment of chanting she finally stood up.

"This person, how will we deal with him?"

He was pushed from behind and fell down. Feng Ming thought to himself that even though Lu Dan was an evil person, he still knows how to treat people with respect, but these old ladies was not so much.

“Head Priestess, this Duke Ming dares to disrespect the gods, even if we do not hang him, we have to cut all of his veins on his arms and legs to punish him.”

Feng Ming was angry at how cruel these ladies were and decided that if anything were to happen he might as well just hit his head against something and be done with it.

FM: Head Priestess! You can't do that! If you harm me, I will...I will... the gods would be angry, this whole palace will collapse!

Hearing those ominous words, everyone was shocked, even the Head Priestess stared with opened eyes at Feng Ming.

HP: What audacity! You dare to curse at the worship alter/temple!

FM: You're the outrageous one! I am protected by the gods. If you all dare to harm me, you will all be punished.

HP: The gods are of high status, why would they take notice and protect a lowly mortal like you!

Feng Ming decided since he already lied, it's best to follow the lie through.

FM: Although Head Priestess resides in the palace every day, you should have heard of the gods that have been appearing recently? Why did the fire light up in the night sky above Bo Jian's city and why did thousands of Li soldiers were burned alive on the shores of Aman River? It was because their rulers were disrespectful to the gods and had desire to harm me; therefore, had to receive punishment. If the gods were not protecting me, then can Head Priestess explain why every year Dong Fan is at a loss, injured civilians everywhere and yet Xi Lei, where I am reside and rule continue to prosper, grains are plentiful more than ever? ...

Head Priestess was persuaded by Feng Ming as she tried to think of any other possible reason for all the strange phenomenal.

HP: If you are truly protected by the gods, then they will definitely appear. I will wait starting tonight to see what order the god of the pond has. If within the next three days, the gods don't appear, you will be placed with the crime of cursing the spiritual alter, with the punishment of hanging, even the Great King cannot say otherwise. Someone, bring him to the dungeon and carefully guard him.

There is still three days to escape. The immediate danger is gone, but before Feng Ming could let out a sigh of relief, he was dragged away by the guards to a nearby staircase.

Feng Ming was pushed into a room with a stone bed and the gates closed heavily behind him. His arms were untied before entering. Looking around, Feng Ming noticed there was no windows, no blanket, no fire, just random straws/weeds all four corners. Other than that, there was nothing else.

This was the poorest condition and environment Feng Ming had witnessed ever since he came to this world.

CHAPTER 13

Feng Ming is locked in the dungeon and he has no way to tell time or what day it is. The weather is cold outside and even colder inside. At that moment he wishes to eat some of Chiu Lan's tasty cooking.

He is angry at how the ladies treated him since even when he was captured by Ruo Yan or Lu Dan, at least they didn't starve him like that. Feng Ming could only curse out at them: "Stinky old ladies" and then laid down to rest.

Where is Rong Tian at this time?

Xi Lei changed ruler, there is such a thing like that? Tong Jian Min and Tong Er teamed up?

Was Cai Qing's secret revealed by Rong Tian? Cai Jiang is a son of An He, created from the body of Feng Ming, this strange relationship, what to do?

The next morning, Lu Dan came in front of the Heaven and Earth palace and told them that he has an order from the Great King to visit Duke Ming. Lu Dan was angry that those ladies dare to lock up Duke Ming in the worst cell within the place.

LD: Duke Ming, Lu Dan came to visit you.

No reply so Lu Dan used a fire torch nearby to peer inside.

LD: Duke Ming! What happened to you?

Feng Ming sat with his back against the wall, his arms grabbed hold of his legs, his head slightly tilted and was in a drowsy state.

LD: Open the door.

The guard tried telling Lu Dan that with Head Priestess's orders, he cannot open the door, but Lu Dan gave him an evil look.

LD: I want you to open the door.

Unable to counter Lu Dan, the guard opened up the gate. Lu Dan pushed open the door and quickly stood in front of Feng Ming.

LD: Duke Ming? (he noticed that Feng Ming's breathing was irregular, his cheeks were red. When placing his hand on his forehead, it was extremely hot.) Quickly lead the way outside, order the servants to prepare the cold medicine! (Before waiting for the guard to take action, he already carried Feng Ming onto his back and rushed outside).

"Advisor, you cannot do that! Head Priestess already has ordered..."

Even though Lu Dan looked weak, he was extremely strong. Carrying Feng Ming on his back, he didn't look tired. He gave the guard a slap on the face causing him to fall backward a few steps.

LD: I am a country's Advisor, and yet a lowlife like you can block my way? (He turned around and left).

That guard didn't dare to stop him or persuade him, instead he only chase after them.

However, while running pass the dungeons and then upstairs, the Priestesses appeared and lead by the Head Priestess.

HP: Where does Advisor want to bring the prisoner of the Priestess's dungeon to?

LD: Duke Ming is a special guest of Lu Dan who came from Xi Lei. Today he is sick; I have to bring him to be treated.

HP: This person is guilty of an extreme crime of cursing the spiritual alter. Since he is sick, it is the punishment of the gods.

LD: Head Priestess, you said that after three days, you will deal with the issue. But if Duke Ming were to die, and if the gods appear, then wouldn't you be the one to desecrate the gods first?

HP: (she laughed) If he dies, then that is the gods' will, why would I be blamed? Advisor is a beloved confidante of the Great King, we will not blame your rude entrance of the prison if you ask for one hour of forgiveness in front of the holy pond. As for Duke Ming, we advise you to let him go, we will take care of our business.

From the beginning, Feng Ming was immobile on top of Lu Dan's back, he was heavily drifted in an unconscious state. His hot temperature penetrated Lu Dan's clothes. He knew if Duke Ming were to be handed over to these cruel ladies, he would not be able to survive. Looking around

at all the guards and priestesses surrounding him, he lifted his head up: “What if we make an exchange?”

CHAPTER 14

Feng Ming was drifting in a sea of darkness, don't know how long until he awakes from his sleepy state. Finally, he got enough energy to open up his eyes.

Waking up, Feng Ming saw a familiar pair of beautiful eyes and recognized the person next to him. He tried to force a smile.

FM: I didn't believe that I would still be alive to see Advisor.

Lu Dan looked carefully at him for a long time and then let out a sigh.

LD: Finally Duke Ming has woken up. Lu Dan was afraid that if Duke Ming was unconscious for the continuous three days, then there won't be any way to deal with the priestesses so I was forced to give Duke Ming a higher strength of medication. I was afraid that Duke Ming's body won't be able to take it, but after one day you have woke up. You really are blessed by the gods.

The words “blessed by the gods” made Feng Ming remembered what he said to threatened those priestesses before. The Head Priestess also said that if after three days, there is no appearance of the gods then she will kill him. The only person that was able to stand in front of them was Lu Dan, but Lu Dan is also not someone good, but because of this pitiful small life, Feng Ming had to flatter him a bit. Thinking about it, Feng Ming giggled and looked at Lu Dan.

FM: Advisor is such an intelligent person and also a country's support. The Great King does not have a shortage of talented people, with Advisor here, I don't have to worry about those priestesses harming me, am I right?

Lu Dan glanced at Feng Ming, he didn't say anything but lowered himself to help Feng Ming sit upright. Awhile later, his pair of eyes revealed a slight sadness, he spoke as if sighing.

LD: It seems like Duke Ming does not know who holds the true power in Dong Fan.

Feng Ming's face reddens: "This...I just heard a bit..." Rong Tian did teach him a bit about it, but that little fact was forgotten and already send back to Rong Tian.

LD: Dong Fan is a kingdom that worships the gods. From the royalties all the way down to the common people, everyone believes about the gods wholeheartedly. Because of this common outlook, everyone in Dong Fan is more united than all the other kingdoms. The Heaven and Earth palace of the Gods, where it holds the national treasure Heaven and Earth ring is a holy place in the hearts of everyone in Dong Fan...and because of that, the priestesses use the reputation of the Heaven and Earth ring to corrupt day by day, and even intervene with national affairs. Using the excuse of the Gods to eliminate anything opposing them that for more than 100 years, the power of the royal bloodline in Dong Fan changed, even our Great King has to look into their faces to put out orders.

Maybe remembering about all the evil doings of the priestesses, Lu Dan's eyes lit up in anger.

LD: This position of Dong Fan's Advisor has always been in the hands of the priestesses, most of the time, the Head Priestess take over this position. With national affairs of the kingdom, without the consent of the Advisor, the Great King cannot do as he pleases. Duke Ming, think about it, a group of priestesses like that, it is not different than a bunch of corrupted officials using their powers to plot a revolt.

Feng Ming was surprised and asked Lu Dan: "Aren't you Dong Fan's Advisor?" Lu Dan laughed sourly.

LD: Does Duke Ming know that we had to go through so much suffering, sacrificed so many loyal confidantes beside the Great King in order to take back this position from the priestesses? However, it's a pity that the reputable position of priestesses cannot be wavered in the hearts of the people. To stand against them would only lead to chaos. The Great King and my effort combined will only even the score without loss or gain. However, all the other kingdoms are becoming stronger and also witnessing a destroyed kingdom. If we don't quickly get rid of this harmful root of the priestesses, then how can Dong Fan prosper and become stronger to defend outside attacks?

Feng Ming thought: *But I am your prisoner, even if you were to confess about your kingdom's chaotic state, I will not side with you.* Even though he thought about that, Feng

Ming couldn't help but admire Lu Dan. This admiration had started for an unknown period, which made him scratch his head in confusion.

FM: No wonder those old grandmas looked unpleasant when seeing you. Oh, but why does Advisor have to force me here like this? The state of Dong Fan is already chaotic, so why traveled thousands of miles to bother Xi Lei. If you want to defeat outsiders, you need to calm the state within, this is the famous line of ...of my master Sunzi.

LD: If you want to defeat outsiders, you need to calm the state within... (Lu Dan mumbled those two lines and then sighed) Your master has a view beyond many people, every word of these lines are correct. (Didn't know what he remembered, but he sat up straight and looked outside the window) Being with Duke Ming for some time now, Lu Dan has more admiration for Duke Ming. To be frank with Duke Ming, if it wasn't the last resort, Lu Dan would never dare to offend a powerful kingdom like Xi Lei.

Seeing the not fully convinced Feng Ming's face, Lu Dan could only chuckled sadly.

LD: These recent years, Dong Fan continued to meet with natural disasters. The priestesses had used this fact to spread rumors that the cause was related to my position as an Advisor, making the Gods angry and send punishments, everything directed at me. If we did not take action, I'm afraid that Lu Dan had already been defeated by the Head Priestess.

FM: Ah...your method was to trick me to come here? Causing Rong Tian and all the other countries become enemies, wasting away Xi Lei's power, then for me to teach you the military strategies, improve Dong Fan's military army. If you succeed, then Advisor would have done a great service, even the priestesses have to give you some respect.

Lu Dan's plan was revealed by Feng Ming, his face was a bit red, and he laughed softly.

LD: The intelligence of Duke Ming, the rest of the world all knows. But Lu Dan wasn't afraid to take the risk of inviting Duke Ming to Dong Fan. There is also another important reason, only one person like Duke Ming can become the one to change the fate of Dong Fan and also the one who can sleep at the Heaven and Earth palace, the holiest place in the hearts of the common people of Dong Fan.

While they were in the middle of talking, a maid brought up a bowl of medicine for Feng Ming to drink. Feng Ming didn't like to drink bitter medicine, but because he wanted to act tough and

not be looked down upon, he sipped the bowl of medicine down. After drinking it, Lu Dan handed him a bowl of sweet syrup for him to drink to remove the bitter the taste. Feng Ming tells him that since he is already a fish on a platter, he isn't afraid that Lu Dan might poison him. Feng Ming then remembered where they left off.

FM: What is this holy palace in the hearts of the common people in Dong Fan? I already been there, it's a prison, and if I was there any longer, I would have froze to death.

LD: Those evil women, they wanted Duke Ming to die in the prison. Even if Duke Ming did not use offensive words, they will still find a way to push you to death. (Lu Dan seemed to have touched a wound inside him, his eyes narrowed suddenly.)

FM: Kill me? They really hate Xi Lei or did Rong Tian do something to offend them?

LD: Duke Ming is rather simple minded, haven't you heard about the innocent lives sacrificed when fighting within the palace? Xi Lei or Rong Tian have nothing to do with it. They want to kill Duke Ming just because Duke Ming is a guest of mine.

FM: I understand! If the invited guest of Advisor was allowed to stay at the Heaven and Earth palace and become one of the few guests that stayed there then your position as Dong Fan's Advisor will be a step higher and take the advantage of winning the hearts of the common people. And then you can stand against those old grandmas? It's no wonder that those ladies hate my guts. If I were to suddenly fall ill and die, then they'll say that I have been punished by the Gods. Just a bit more and this prisoner could have been a special guest within the Heaven and Earth palace, Advisor also had to receive a bit of punishment too, right? They dare treat me like a toy, believing that my life is not worth a single cent?!

LD: Actually in the beginning, Duke Ming has every qualification to stay within the Heaven and Earth palace. With Duke Ming's reputation, as well as the strength of Xi Lei and everyone would supported our Great King, are enough that the Head Priestess cannot refused. However, who would have imagined that Xi Lei would have turned out this way? Duke Ming has loss the main support of Xi Lei. Dong Fan also has one less powerful kingdom. The priestesses also have a reason to not accept the special guest position of Duke Ming. The news of Xi Lei's change had sabotaged my Great King and my plan, causing the outcome to change its course. Right now, the power of the priestesses is very strong, even outranking the Great King. It's a pity that Dong Fan is just a small kingdom, how can it endure their torment?

FM: Advisor doesn't need to explain this to me. I already know the overview of it. Advisor and the priestesses are battling against each other for victory with only one winner. My life is also within this battle to see who the victor is. Then let us put out a promise. Advisor doesn't need to ask me to write down military strategies anymore. Also, you don't need to use other people's words to threaten me. I will obediently stand within this room, eat and sleep, sleep and then eat, I will not run about all over the place allowing those old ladies to skin me alive and cause you to lose face again.

Lu Dan surprisingly asked: "Where does Duke Ming think that you are right now?"

FM: This nice warm room, decorated extravagantly, isn't it the quarter chamber of yours?

There was a dead silence in the room. Awhile later, he finally heard the voice of Lu Dan.

LD: This is the (VIP) special room within the Heaven and Earth Palace. The Head Priestess gave consent for Duke Ming to stay here for three days. After three days, if there is no appearance of the Gods, they will execute you in front of the holy pond. (Looking into the wide eyed Feng Ming, Lu Dan explained) You are a guest that I brought here and made offensive statement to curse the Gods, if rumors of your death happened in the Heaven and Earth palace, the Head Priestess will use her ability to take advantage of disrespecting the Gods to force the Great King to execute me. If others already want to harm me, then why not take the chance with Duke Ming's great fortune for once. Therefore, I made a promise with the Head Priestess, in three days; they have to allow Duke Ming to manage his health in the best way possible. Nothing is allowed to happen to Duke Ming. The exchange was after three days; my fate will be the same as Duke Ming.

FM: What? (Feng Ming yelled out). I'm still haven't escape those old ladies. I'm still within their grasp? (Looking around, making sure that no one is present besides them). If within three days, there is no appearance of the Gods, would you also die with me?

Lu Dan chuckled sadly.

LD: This is what Lu Dan was trying to explain to Duke Ming. Right now, we are both on the same boat. Duke Ming must guarantee that the Gods will appear.

FM: Ah, help me. How can there be an appearance by the Gods?

LD: Duke Ming is intelligent and talented, if you're not certain, why would you lie about the appearance of the Gods?

FM: Those old grandmas wanted to skin me alive; I have to find a certain strategy so you can use some time to save this small pitiful life of mine. Because of that military strategy book, you have to find a way to save me!

He also wanted to buy some time so that Rong Tian, don't know where he is right now, to come and perform the "Hero saving Damsel in distress" part.

Even the calm and reserved Lu Dan was paled as he looked at Feng Ming.

LD: I don't care. You can make the lanterns of Bo Jian fly without wind, the fire at Aman River brightly lit up half the sky of Yong Yin, then you can also create another extraordinary phenomenon in Dong Fan. This life and death situation, it is Duke Ming's choice.

Feng Ming blinked his eyes, and stared at Lu Dan. A moment later, he yelled out.

FM: Help me!! Rong Tian, hurry and appear!! Those ladies are really serious this time!!

Chapter 15

A rare sunny day in early winter, Feng Ming and Lu Dan sat facing each other in the magnificent room.

With the situation as it is now, no matter what kind of animosity that happened between them, they are now a line of grasshoppers. Life or death, their fate is tied together as a pair on the same boat. Feng Ming knows that 99.9% that these women of the worship temple are inhumane, so it doesn't matter whether Lu Dan is good or bad, he is now considered a close ally.

Regarding life and death matter, Feng Ming wasn't against using his knowledge for just Xi Lei. He told Lu Dan several stories and drank a bunch of tea, he then asked Lu Dan.

FM: Advisor, can you follow these fairytale stories and think up a method to create a miracle to happen?

LD: (shook his head) Those folktales that Feng Ming talked about, I can't even imagine of them, how can I even follow along?

Feng Ming's mood was not good. Lu Dan could come up with an elaborate scheme to kidnap him from Rong Tian, but he could not think of any method to deal with those old hags out there?

Looking outside the window, the sunlight was beautiful like a dream, causing warmth in the hearts of people. However, he remembered: "the remaining time they have left is decreasing day by day."

His psychology teacher once said: "people's sincerity can touched others." Is he telling Feng Ming to admit his mistake and apologize to that Head Priestess at this time?

Feng Ming inhaled deeply, oh teacher...you don't know how dark a power struggle is. I am also very sincere, but I don't understand why everyone keeps aiming for this small life of mine. I, Duke Ming has never single handedly treat anyone harshly before.

Sighing in boredom, in front of his eyes appeared a dish of bright red fruits.

Lu Dan was still Lu Dan; he calmly held a fruit in his hand.

LD: Life and death are already determined (fated); it is useless to worry Duke Ming. Hurry and eat this fruit, all the fruits that were brought from outside are from the Gods who gift them to special guests. They are sweet and can regain a person's health.

FM: A fruit is a fruit, everyone eats it, what does it matter with the Gods? (He reached out for one).

LD: (shook his head in disagreement) What Duke Ming said is wrong. The Gods manage the mortal realm; they will reward the best things to the noble ones. The royal family was beloved by the Gods therefore they were able to hold onto royal power. If not, then why is there a difference between nobility and slavery? Not talking about humans, for simpler examples like the plants, receiving the benefits of rain and dirt from the Gods. Those that are blessed by the

Gods will blossom beautiful bright red, but those that are hated will fade and have ugly appearances, food of the lowly commoners.

That fruit was indeed very sweet, after wiping his mouth; Feng Ming took a moment to cut in.

FM: The story of royalties is too complicated, it's part of the topic of economics, politics, and even if I talk about it you won't understand. As for the plants, I'll let you know, it's because those plants use sunlight to create that red color, that is chemistry, you wouldn't understand. That's right, chemistry...

Don't know what Feng Ming was thinking about but after talking midsentence, his whole body froze, his eyes stared straight ahead, and his mouth won't stop muttering.

FM: Chemistry, how come I didn't think about chemistry? (He snapped out of it and shouted out) Haha, I'm truly a genius, I should have thought about using chemistry. (He was excited and turned over to Lu Dan) Advisor, the holy pond seems to be the color blue, is that right?

LD: (nodded his head) It is blue, the water in the holy pond is unique and very clear, it is completely different than the other pond water, and it is the Gods...

FM: What Gods? Forget it, forget it. Even if I talk to you about chemistry, you wouldn't understand it. Just be quiet so I can think of something. (Feng Ming sat down and tried to remember what his chemistry teacher had taught him).

The pond is blue? Some time ago, he had read somewhere that near the mineral rich volcanic area; the water of the pond would have a unique color because they contain metal ions. But within the number of metal ions, those ponds containing copper sulfate will create a beautiful blue color like that. This copper compound, when he was in school, Feng Ming loved to do experiment tests and he clearly remembered that a low concentration of copper sulfate will have a blue color. However, if there is a high concentration then the solution will turn bluish green.

But...with his simple chemistry knowledge, how can he be certain that the water in the Heaven and Earth pond truly contain copper sulfate? In case of a mistake, then wouldn't he be the first chemist in the world who died because of fail experiment? No matter how great, his useless self will still have to try.

Lu Dan saw Feng Ming sitting and giggling by himself that he can only let out a sigh. Although he doesn't know what Feng Ming is thinking, but he knew it had something to do with their lives. Lu Dan coughed once and softly asked: "Don't know what Duke Ming is planning..."

FM: Excellent! Very excellent! (Feng Ming shouted out; pound his hand on the table causing the cups to jump up.) It's better to be half alive than half dead. Let's say it contain copper sulfate!

Just when he turned around, he saw Lu Dan standing there, staring straight at him. Feng Ming laughed out loud, his mood lightened up and treated Lu Dan with utmost intimacy, and he patted Lu Dan's shoulders.

FM: Lu Dan, you most beautiful person, the miracle I've thought about, but I need you to help me find two things. The first thing is sodium, ah no, sodium is perishable, very hard to find. How about this, I need a bit of sulfur compound; as long as it has sulfur in it is good enough. The second thing is I need you to tell someone to secretly pour that into the Heaven and Earth pond. Haha... once you follow that then the miraculous phenomenon will appear, I guarantee that those priestesses will be shocked speechless, kneel down and ask for mercy, I bet you.

The concept is very simple, when sulfur ions combine with copper ions, they will create copper sulfide, black sediment. With a large amount of sulfur, the copper sulfate will react, causing the precious pond of those priestesses to turn from clear blue to a terrifying black color. When that happens, just telling them that they have offended the Gods that protected Duke Ming and need to receive punishment, then it's only natural that they will view him a VIP guest.

Thinking about that, Feng Ming looked over at Lu Dan, once the Head Priestess see him as a VIP guest, then Advisor Lu Dan would not be able to cause hardship to him anymore.

Feng Ming decided to put aside the other option that the pond might not be made of copper sulfate. Dealing with danger like this, he should not have any doubt!

Lu Dan was confused about the scientific words Feng Ming just said, a moment later, he grimaced and asked: "The things Feng Ming just said about sulfur, combining sulfur, and ions...what are they?"

Trying to explain this was not an easy task, and he cannot draw it out for Lu Dan to see.

Feng Ming thought about over again and then asked.

FM: Near Dong Fan's inner palace, are there any volcanic mountains?

This time, Lu Dan understood his meaning and nodded.

LD: Dong Fan is a kingdom of volcanic mountains. The whole country, counting large and small ones, there are more than one hundred of them. Even the Heaven and Earth Mountain, where we are right now, more than 200 hundred years ago was also a volcanic mountain. After the fire ceased, the holy pond appeared, the Heaven and Earth ring was also discovered, it became a national treasure gifted to the royal bloodline of Dong Fan....

FM: Excellent! (Not waiting until Lu Dan finished, Feng Ming had already clapped his hands loudly) So this place here is a volcanic mountain. Sulfuric materials usually appear the most around volcanic mountains. That's right, having people without a chemistry background to find sulfur is very difficult. Even though I recently recovered, I still need to be careful. Whatever! We'll go steal some so those old hags will have a chance to see it with their own eyes. It's not far away; we can wander around places around here. Hehe, after we have these, Head Priestess or holy pond will be no more.

Inside the room suddenly was filled with a confused silence.

A long moment later, Lu Dan hesitantly smiled.

LD: Duke Ming, we are both imprisoned right now. Don't talk about leaving Heaven and Earth palace; even stepping foot outside this door is not possible.

Lu Dan saw the smile froze on Feng Ming's face, he continued.

LD: Also, my personal bodyguards are not allowed to leave this place. Right now, even a piece of message, we cannot send out.

Feng Ming plopped down on the bed.

Rong Tian...oh Rong Tian, if you brought Mei Ji at this time it would be okay, as long as you come save me, I'll forgive everything...

I really don't want to not see you again...

CHAPTER 16

The method that Feng Ming took much effort to think of was knocked down by Lu Dan. He ate the dinner meal without much appetite until a gust of cold wind blew across his neck.

Feng Ming shivered; he looked outside the window and surprisingly said: "It's snowing."

Sure enough, outside the window, snow was falling about across the sky. But because it was nighttime, under the dim moonlight, no one would see the faint whiteness of the snow, only the curtain of mist. Lu Dan came closer to the window; he looked outside for a long time and then said.

LD: This is the first snow fall of this winter this year; don't know if next year we can see the same beautiful snow scenery like this. (He turned to Feng Ming and gave him a faint beautiful smile and continued) Thank you Duke Ming for your help with the supply food, or else against the upcoming snow, I don't know how many people of Dong Fan would lose their lives.

Feng Ming heard the sincerity of Lu Dan; he secretly held the thin hand hanging beside Lu Dan. His lips let out a chuckle and his voice filled with longing: "If you weren't an Advisor of Dong Fan, it would be nice."

Lu Dan held onto Feng Ming's hands tightly, slowly answered: "But I never once regret it."

Feng Ming was surprised and looked back at him. Lu Dan didn't mention it again, the corner of his mouth curved upward in satisfaction.

A rare kind of tranquility was suddenly interrupted by a burst of heavy footsteps outside the door. A deep male voice with suppressed anger said: "Even the path that I go, you dare to block my way?!"

Feng Ming secretly looked at Lu Dan. Lu Dan's eyes were filled with a touch of warmth, but also a faint of hidden anxiety. Having an effect on Lu Dan, if it wasn't the owner of the other half of the red thread of love then who could it be?

The door that was silently closed suddenly burst opened, followed by a high voice: "The Great King has arrived!"

"No need for all of you to serve, disappear for me."

The image of Dong Fan King had appeared before Feng Ming.

The door quietly shut behind, the three people in the room examined each other, no one had any intention of saying the first word. A gust of wind with a bit of snow blew against Lu Dan's back, but he was not aware

Feng Ming carefully observed, Dong Fan King is around his early 20s, a square face, sharp eyebrows, piercing eyes without the same fierceness of a Great King.

Feng Ming is Xi Lei Duke Ming, was tricked into coming to Dong Fan, so there was no need for him to make his greeting towards him. But Lu Dan is an Advisor, he also did not make any greetings when seeing him, with a complex expression he looked at the Great King for a long while and then faintly sighed.

LD: Why did you do this, Your Majesty?"

When Dong Fan King saw Lu Dan, his mind went blank until he saw the snow blowing into the room that he awakened and brought himself to walk closer to Lu Dan.

DFK: Oh, you...look at what you've done? This isn't necessary...

LD: If the safety of a country requires the life of Lu Dan, then how is that not necessary? (Lu Dan raised his eyebrows and smiled. He quickly stopped Dong Fan King and held his hand tightly. His voice lowered.) Your Majesty has to remember clearly, this situation today is due to Lu Dan, none of it is related to Your Majesty.

Dong Fan King shook his head.

DFK: Everything I listen to you, but except for this one.

LD: The Priestesses are ruthless, if the Great King don't follow the orders of the Gods and involve yourself in this situation then would you step foot into their schemes?

Dong Fan King looked as if he has some skills. No matter how much Lu Dan told him not to involve himself, he still reply with “except for this situation.”

Anxiety appeared on Lu Dan’s face, he wanted to say something else, but Dong Fan King stopped him suddenly.

DFK: What’s the point of protecting this King position? If I don’t have you, I still would be forced by another person. Those days when you left Dong Fan, they continuously send portrait of noble women to me, forcing me to take on an Empress. I...I rather die than share a bed with another person.

When reaching the emotional point, he forgot about his identity, not only did he not address himself as a King, but he used the informal “I” to address himself.

“You...you...”

Lu Dan was speechless, like an iceberg that has been dissolved. He suddenly reached out to Dong Fan King and pulled him close, lightly stroked his face without saying a single word.

When they were holding each other in an embrace, it was only then that Lu Dan appeared a bit taller than Dong Fan King.

Feng Ming just stood dead still to appreciate the intimate scene of the pair in front of his eyes, he thought to himself that it would be harsh to break up their reunion, but each minute and each second are passing by. The smile of death is appearing nearer, so he had to build up the courage to break up these happy lovebirds.

He reluctantly coughed loudly once, awaking both Dong Fan King and Lu Dan who had ignored any other people outside their view range. Feng Ming giggled at the blush red face of Dong Fan King.

FM: Greetings the Great King of Dong Fan. I am Feng Ming of Xi Lei, a guest of Advisor Lu Dan, someone he invited here, haha, but the method of his invitation is something that does not make someone happy.

Dong Fan King’s eyes glanced over at Feng Ming.

DFK: So it is Xi Lei Duke Ming, I have admired you for a long time. I heard that when Duke Ming first came here, you cursed the fall of the holy palace, I don't know what Dong Fan had did to offend Duke Ming that made you hate us so much?

He treated Lu Dan with much love so of course he would carry all dissatisfaction onto the head of Feng Ming. If Feng Ming did not cursed the holy palace then would the situation become like this?

Feng Ming can't believe that first words Dong Fan King said to him was send blame, he opened his mouth wide for a second, overflowing with anger: *Isn't it because of your Lu Dan that I was forced here in the first place? You are the Great King; of course you would protect your precious lover.*

He suddenly remembered that Rong Tian is also someone who would hide his mistakes. Feng Ming's chest hurt like he was being torn apart. Feng Ming quickly put on a happy face.

FM: Those who are a King should learn how to be humble first, however at this point of life and death, Your Majesty haven't even realized it and wastefully involved the life of Advisor. But it's fine, if Your Majesty want to cry and embrace with Advisor, then just wait until tomorrow when the Priestesses take our lives, afterwards Your Majesty will be free to find other beautiful people.

Lu Dan raised his eyebrows.

LD: We can find our own method of saving ourselves. The Great King does not need to ask about it.

Dong Fan King became emotional, his face suddenly changed, he quickly walked near Feng Ming, his eyes brightened.

DFK: I heard of Duke Ming's reputation as a number one schemer for some time now. You must already came up with a plan to counter, if you really can help our Advisor from this unfortunate disaster, then I'll give anything of Dong Fan to you. (With a bit of hesitation, he clenched his teeth) Even the Heaven and Earth ring, I will not leave out.

LD: Your Majesty mustn't involve yourself in this matter! (Lu Dan stomp his feet and pulled Dong Fan King away).

Who would guess that Dong Fan King held tightly onto Feng Ming's collar and started begging.

DFK: Duke Ming, you must have a plan, as long as you save him, even in exchange for my life, I would be willing.

Feng Ming was grabbed tightly by a supposedly ruler of a kingdom, his eyes blinked in disbelief. It was awhile later that he realized being tightly grabbed like this was very strange, he tried to grabbed hold of his clothes that was tightly pulled by Dong Fan King.

FM: Your Majesty, Your Majesty has to let go first. I still haven't come up with a great scheme, but in order to trick them I have one method, however I need Your Majesty cooperation. Oh for goodness sake, let go already ~

DFK: Duke Ming please continues, I'll agree to everything. (As Dong Fan King let go of Feng Ming, he stuck next to Lu Dan. His mouth couldn't stop mumbling "I agree, I agree" to Feng Ming.)

FM: I need sulfuric acid...no, no...I need sulfide... ah whatever is good; you need to help me put it into the holy pond...

Without finishing, Lu Dan already carried Dong Fan King outside the door and reminded him.

LD: This matter does not involve Your Majesty; Your Majesty must leave now.

DFK: I will not leave!

Out of anger, Dong Fan King broke free of Lu Dan and pulled out a bottle from his chest and said.

DFK: If you dare push me out of this door, I will immediately drink this after you close it.

Don't know what was inside that bottle that was extremely dangerous, but Lu Dan's face immediately turned pale, his eyes widened, he knew that he could not lose his calmness at this time and let out a sigh.

LD: You are the Great King of Dong Fan, how can you easily throw your life away like this?

Dong Fan King held tightly onto the bottle and said.

DFK: The Priestesses causes chaos within the national affairs, the people are suffering endlessly... I am already a useless King; don't tell me you don't know about that already?

Feng Ming coughed again to get their attention. Noticing that their eyes are now glancing over at him, Feng Ming continued like an adult trying to persuade.

FM: Please apologize for talking out of turn, but this matter Advisor is at fault. If at this time, Advisor does not ask for Dong Fan King's help, I'm afraid that tomorrow that beautiful body of yours will just be an ice cold corpse. If Advisor die, the power of the Great King will be diminished, wouldn't he still be tortured to death by those old ladies? I know Advisor does not want to involve the Great King, but getting involved or not will still lead to dead, if that is so then why not work together to overcome this hardship for once?

Dong Fan King continuously nodded his head. Lu Dan looked at Feng Ming and sadly said.

LD: I have used my life to gamble with Duke Ming to defeat the Priestesses, but have loss more than half. To be honest, right now, Lu Dan no longer has confident in Duke Ming like before and does not wish the Great King to be implicated.

FM: (Feng Ming's face reddened) Ah...this...

LD: (suddenly laughed) However...since the situation has come to this point, Lu Dan does not have the ability to disagree. With our ruler like this, how can I be at peace?

Dong Fan King's demeanor brightened up, he stood in front of Feng Ming and lowered himself in respect.

DFK: Time is running out, I urged Duke Ming to explain the complete plan.

Feng Ming inhaled a breath.

FM: The first thing we need is sulfide; oh you probably don't know what sulfide is? Sulfuric acid, have you seen sulfuric acid before? How about gunpowder? ... What, even explosive you have not heard of before? ...

Explaining for a long time, Dong Fan King's face was still puzzled, he didn't understand a single thing.

LD: Why doesn't Duke Ming write it out for us?

FM: It's a formula; do you really want me to write it for both of you to see? Even if I write it out, you wouldn't be able to understand it! (Feng Ming was frustrated, rubbed his head and rolled onto the bed)

Outside the window, the snow continued to fall even more, the ground was almost filled with a cover of white snow. Lu Dan decided to close the window and order the servant to add more heat.

The servant followed the order and added more wood to the fire and then silently left.

The room became warmer.

"That..." Feng Ming sat back up, he decided not to use those scientific words and tried to use layman terms that an ancient person can understand.

FM: Those volcanic mountains, are there any that has strange rocks? For example, the color is strange or the smell is unpleasant.

LD: There are thousands of rocks on the mountains; Duke Ming asked this matter, how can anyone be able to reply?

But Dong Fan King's eyes brighten up and asked: "An unpleasant smell? Doesn't Si Qi Yan (Dead Eye) usually emit a strange gas?"

Lu Dan suddenly remembered and nodded: "That's right, and I almost forgot."

FM: Let's hear the details, how strange is the gas?

LD: Si Qi Yan is a hole that usually emits strange things, the smell is atrocious, and those who smell it would feel uncomfortable. Plants around that hole would usually die; therefore, it is named "Dead Eye." I heard that it's a place that the Gods write down all the bad crimes of the mortals. If the mortals commit a lot of crimes then the Dead Eye will create more unpleasant gas.

Feng Ming put aside the part about the Gods and decided to learn more about this strange "Dead Eye." Around a volcanic mountain, what is the normal gas that usually appears? He had

read several books about natural science and it seems like many places due to volcanoes and the earth, a lot carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide escape from the crack forming a strange gas.

FM: Is the smell really unpleasant? Is it difficult to breathe?

“A bit.”

Feng Ming has vague memories of the gas; it seems that the kind of gas that causes someone to have trouble breathing or fall into a coma is ...carbon monoxide.

Ah... then is that gas ...carbon monoxide? But the component of carbon monoxide is not stable, and can easily react to form carbon dioxide, if that's so then the likelihood of carbon dioxide is greater.

If a person is to breathe in carbon dioxide then they would have a hard time breathing. If it's difficult to breathe, it's because their lungs cannot withstand it, therefore they feel uncomfortable.

That's right, it must be carbon dioxide, carbon is very abundant in nature and also oxygen, so the chance of becoming carbon dioxide is very likely.

If his chemistry teacher was here, he must have a heart attack.

While thinking about it for some time, Feng Ming suddenly remembered an important thing, inside carbon dioxide, there is no sulfur... Oh heavens, if there is no sodium sulfate precipitate then how can a miracle happen? Feng Ming was frustrated and collapsed his shoulders.

Dong Fan King held his breath and examined every move of Feng Ming, he saw him raised his eyebrows in surprised, then lowered his head, unable to understand, he asked: “Does it not make sense?”

LD: Can Duke Ming explain what the gas emitted by the Dead Eye has any use? I hear Duke Ming explain awhile ago and still do not know what Duke Ming is planning.

FM: I don't know where to start explaining to you, it's something rather microscopic.... (Then he suddenly remembered) That's right, copper oxide has oxygen ions, carbon dioxide has that ions, we can use it!

Due to excitement, Feng Ming held onto Dong Fan King and shook him.

FM: Your Majesty, listen to me clearly, I need you to do me one thing. If you can do it well, your beautiful Advisor will be saved, therefore, you need to do it well, very well, take care of it, don't let any error happen!

Dong Fan King was anxiously sweating: "Hurry up and say it Duke Ming!"

FM: I want you to bring the gas of the Dead Eye into the Heaven and Earth pond. Do it in a way that is not within the viewing range of those Priestesses. The job of how to bring the gas will be your responsibility. But before the end of tomorrow, you must definitely bring it within the pond. As long as the gas flows into the holy pond, then we would be saved!!

Lu Dan didn't know what Feng Ming wanted to do, but seeing how certain he is, he couldn't help but have a glimpse of hope.

LD: But to trick the Priestesses, bringing the gas into the Heaven and Earth pond... that pond is not ordinary; it was created by an outside mountain. For it to come to Heaven and Earth palace is due to the effort of the first Priestess that brought the blue water inside.

Feng Ming suddenly clapped his hands.

FM: Excellent! If it is a diverted channel of water then there will be a diversion path. If we stop that water path and connect the stream of gas then this plan will be successful. But Your Majesty, that carbon dioxide...ah...I mean that deadly gas...to make sure everything goes smoothly, after you find that Dead Eye, you need to test to see if it is carbon dioxide. The method to test it is very simple. First of all, you need to find a bit of water with? it is this white stuff...

Halfway through, there was a sudden sound of the door unlocking, Feng Ming closed his mouth as a reflex.

The three of them looked towards the door; there was an image of a frail person with high nose, standing like a ghost that came from the ground below. Feng Ming shivered.

Lu Dan didn't change his expression, only displayed a respected greeting.

Dong Fan King's expression was not natural, he coldly asked: "Why is Head Priestess here?"

HP: It's snowing outside, why haven't the Great King returned to his palace?

DFK: I'm not tired.

Head Priestess repeated the same line: "It's snowing outside, why hasn't the Great King returned to his palace?"

DFK: When I want to leave, I will leave. (his narrowed his eyebrows in anger) Head Priestess is already of old age, why are you still walking about at night, quickly return to rest.

The Head Priestess did not leave at all, but instead stood still where she was and didn't move an inch. Standing like a statue and as if not even breathing. Feng Ming and Dong Fan King looked at each other; Lu Dan's curved the corner of his mouth, coldly observed the old lady. All of them knew that if Dong Fan King did not leave then don't even expect that old hag to leave either. But with her present, what else can they discuss?

Dong Fan King had no other choice and but to leave.

DFK: Fine, fine, let me return to my palace. (He stopped to look at Lu Dan intimately; Lu Dan lightly nodded in response)

DFK: Take care Duke Ming, I will pray to the Gods to ask them to protect you both. (He winked at Feng Ming, revealing that he will accomplish the mission)

FM: Your Majesty, that matter...

The method of testing for carbon dioxide was not mention completely. But with the situation like this, he cannot mess it up so he silently thought: even if they test it out and find out that it wasn't carbon dioxide, there wouldn't be any other method, testing it or not wouldn't make any difference. Since it's like this, he can only wish that his hypothesis is not wrong. He clenched his teeth hard.

FM: Take care Your Majesty; you don't need to worry about me. Advisor and I already have the Gods' protection, if they dare to hurt us, then the holy pond that day will meet with disaster.

A piercing glare seem to stabbed straight at his back, no need to ask, he already figured that it was the Head Priestess who was staring at him. The Head Priestess escorted Dong Fan King outside and once again the door was locked up. Inside the room now only had Feng Ming and Lu Dan, the surrounding became cold and lonely once more.

They stare at each other and as if they knew what the other was thinking, they both started laughing.

LD: It's hard to have a beautiful snow scenery like this, the room is also very warm, I might just stay up to admire the falling snow.

FM: That's good. Let's add more wood to the fire and open up the windows.

They are both very intelligent men and understood clearly that their fate tomorrow is something very difficult to overcome, the percentage of success is very low, but they did not express it, only smiled softly and laid themselves against the window.

Outside the snow continued to fall, it is no longer just snow powder but are now large snow specks. The two of them did not say a single word, only looked up at the moon within the sky of snow, the two of them, each with their own set of thoughts.

And just like that, a whole night went by.

CHAPTER 17

The next day was judgment day.

The falling snow had already stopped since morning and the sun came up. The Priestesses were also not frugal. When morning came, they already prepared lots of special dishes and the afternoon meal had a total of 8 different dishes, twice as much as yesterday. The dinner meal was even more extravagant and needed four strong guards to carry the dishes in, which filled up two tables.

It seems that all the dishes of Dong Fan must all have been placed there at once.

Feng Ming opened his eyes wide at all the delicious dishes that he probably won't be able to eat all of them.

FM: My hometown has a custom, if a criminal received capital punishment then the guards will give him a complete meal for him to fill up, so that he won't become a hungry ghost once he goes to the underworld. Does Dong Fan also have the same custom?

LD: In Dong Fan, only the nobles have the honor of this privilege.

The two of them were silent, facing the numerous delicious dishes on the table and yet no appetite. Lu Dan took one bottle of wine.

LD: Duke Ming, later we will leave this place, within the cave, it will be dark and cold, so drink a bit wine to warm yourself. (He poured a cup of wine and pushed it towards Feng Ming)

FM: Thank you. (He drank the whole cup down and placed the cup forcefully on the table.) The hardest thing in the world is death. I'm not afraid of death, but...but I'm afraid that he will find out and will suffer...

Noticing that Lu Dan was looking at him, Feng Ming smiled.

FM: I know what Advisor is thinking. I'll be honest with you; I don't believe that Rong Tian is dead. If I don't see his dead corpse in front of my eyes, I will still believe that he is alive. (Feng Ming laid his face down on the table and cried out loud).

Lu Dan stared at him for a second, without saying anything to comfort him; he just simply took the cup and poured another full cup of wine.

Although Feng Ming was lying on the table, his hand reached for the filled cup of wine and drank it with his head tilted.

Lu Dan continued to pour him more wine, and drank one himself. Eventually he said, "Duke Ming, the bottle of wine is empty."

Feng Ming stopped crying; he sat straight up and threw the cup of wine down onto the floor. The blue cup shattered into many pieces.

He took his sleeves and wiped his tears; he looked up at Lu Dan and smiled wide.

FM: Don't let those old ladies know that I have cried.

The door opened up and the priestesses brought several guards into the room.

"The three days have ended; request Advisor and Duke Ming to come to the holy pond to receive your punishment in front of the Gods."

Both Lu Dan and Feng Ming exit the room and followed the priestesses out. In front, behind, right and left of them were surrounded by the guards. Feng Ming's plan of escaping midway had to be thrown away. As Lu Dan walked, he whispered in Feng Ming's ears.

LD: The Heaven and Earth palace, one half of it is room chambers, and the other half is natural cave, the staircase is part of the cave. The height is very high, inside is very big, with the rocks

outside it's very hard to attack. Therefore, it can be seen as the most defensible place among the other eleven kingdoms. If that wasn't so, then I would have destroyed this place in one night without them noticing and told the whole world that they all die naturally. How hard would that be? (He sighed in regret.)

FM: Advisor should not lose hope, who knows if when we entered below, the Great King will have already accomplished his mission. The Heaven and Earth pond will appear a miracle in front of us. (His tone of voice was not very confident).

The Heaven and Earth palace was indeed very huge, after walking down the stone staircase and entering a cave without any way of escape, the light within the place became dimmer. Several guards waited at the entrance, seeing them near, they immediately light up the fire torch and lead the way. Walking straight for a bit and turning a curve, they finally saw the Heaven and Earth pond appear before their eyes. Feng Ming stared at the pond; the water was still clear blue, with no sign of change.

The Head Priestess lead the other priestesses in front of the pond, she looked coldly at Lu Dan and Feng Ming.

HP: These three days, no miracle appear, it's enough to prove that this person is not protected by the Gods. He disrespect the Gods and cursed the holy palace, the punishment is death. The Gods above, we priestesses made this decision, does Advisor have any objections?

Lu Dan slowly took off his veil that covered his face, his beautiful eyes made a round to look at all of them. His eyes shined like the sun, causing the old ladies to not be able to open their eyes.

LD: It's been a long time since Head Priestess has seen this beautiful seductive face, right? It's a pity that since I was afraid you Priestesses would spread rumors of harming the Great King, I had to wear this veil when entering the inner palace. If I knew that I would eventually die within your hands, then every day, Lu Dan should have show this face that made you crazy with hatred, and walk about.

He laughed several times, his face became cold and he lowered his voice.

LD: You do not need to worry Head Priestess; I am an Advisor, what I said I will not take back. This guest is someone Lu Dan had invited here; it had nothing to do with the Great King. If you want to kill, then do so. But if you dare to touch a single hair of the Great King, then the Gods will punished you to the 9th level of hell, forever tormented without escape!

His face was serious filled with hatred and his words were evil like needle pins thrown straight into the heart of the person. The Head Priestess turned pale, but then straightens up and stared straight at Lu Dan.

HP: Request Advisor to come forth and receive your punishment in front of the Gods.

Several guards come forward and forced Feng Ming and Lu Dan to walk towards the corner of the cave.

FM: What are they planning on doing? (Feng Ming noticed a strange kind of smell in the air within the cave.)

LD: (calmly replied) They are going to kill us.

FM: What? Hurry and think of a plan to stretch out the time! Maybe Dong Fan King will immediately interrupt it!

LD: No need to worry Duke Ming, there are a few other important things to follow.

Under the torch light, there appeared a small corner stone. The width of it was no larger than two fists combine and it was empty inside, not a drop of water. Feng Ming and Lu Dan were dragged to that corner stone, and forced to kneel down. One guard said: "Put your hands out front, onto the Lingzui grooves."

Lu Dan didn't say a word and silently followed. Feng Ming looked around, and had to follow along; he placed his hand onto the corner stone. A gust of cold wind blew against his neck causing him to shiver.

FM: Don't tell me they are planning on chopping our hands at this place? Oh heavens, killing is no problem, but why do you need to use this tortured practice for?

LD: They are not chopping our hands; they are slitting our wrist, so the blood will flow down into the Lingzui pool. Cursing the Gods within the holy palace is a great felony; the criminals have to use their blood to cleanse the Heaven and Earth ring. The Head Priestess will ordered someone to place the wooden bridge over the holy pond and carry down the Heaven and Earth ring that is on top of the large rock and then place the ring into the Lingzui pool...

Feng Ming closed his eyes and shouted out.

FM: And then slit our wrists, telling the guards to hold us down and after the all the blood drain out, we have become two lifeless bodies, and the Heaven and Earth ring will be covered in a pool of fresh blood.

LD: Duke Ming, please don't curse the holy ring.

FM: Fine, you go ahead and use your blood to wash it, and that holy...

Feng Ming widened his eyes, with a bit of hope, he said.

FM: Doesn't the blood platelets naturally prevent us from bleeding heavily? So...if the wound is cut and when the blood no longer flows, then it can be considered that the Gods don't want to kill these prisoners and they have to release us, right?

LD: Who wouldn't bleed if their wrists were cut, how can that be considered a miracle, Duke Ming? Those guards hold a dagger in hand, if the blood clot up for a second, they will slice another cut deeper until we eventually die. Take a look Duke Ming, the wooden bridge is almost done setting up, the Head Priestess will walk towards that rock any minute now.

Feng Ming followed his eyes, the Head Priestess came to the rock in the middle of the pond, and after coming there she will only need to reach out her hands to grab the Heaven and Earth

ring. She did not quickly take it, but instead kneel down and bow three times. The other priestesses also kneel down motionless surrounding the pond.

It was surprisingly quiet inside the cave, only the sound of the Head Priestess's chanting was echoing within. Everyone's attention was on the Heaven and Earth ring, only Feng Ming was staring at the clear blue water of the pond below. Someone help, he didn't want to use his blood to wash a piece of rock!

FM: Hey, do you feel that the pond water is releasing some sort of bubble? (Feng Ming used his shoulder to nudge against Lu Dan).

LD: I don't see anything. (Lu Dan skimmed across the pond and answered honestly).

FM: You really don't see anything?

LD: I don't.

FM: Look again; I felt there must be some sort of bubble escaping.

Lu Dan sighed.

LD: With the situation like this, does Duke Ming plan on lying to yourself?

On the other side of the cave, the Head Priestess already kissed the ring several times, and started standing up; she placed the Heaven and Earth ring high above her head. We're doom; Feng Ming closed his eyes tightly and mumbled.

FM: Rong Tian, my life is over. You are clearly a Xi Lei King and yet you cannot protect your own lover, it will definitely become a large dirty marking in the history books. The history books haven't been written, but I really miss you a lot, in the lonely underworld, there are a bunch of ox heads and horse faces, who won't be as handsome as you. But even if they were as handsome as you, I will not love them. After I die, you can take on an Empress, I won't mind. If you find Mei Ji, it'll be okay, but you have to chant my name "Duke Ming" 200 times, no, 2000 times, or else when I become a ghost, I won't forgive you.

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After the long statement of last words, Feng Ming inhaled deeply again and was about to pull out a long lecture of things he wanted to say to Rong Tian all at once, but his eardrums were about to explode due to the frightening scream of Lu Dan.

LD: It's a miracle! The miracle has appeared! Hurry and see, Duke Ming!

Feng Ming's heart jumped outside of his chest, his eyes widened as he look towards the Heaven and Earth pond.

In the middle of the pond, the steady stream of bubbles was emerging. Within seconds, the beautiful clear blue pond turned into a scary black muddy color and a curtain of mist also rose from the pond without disappearing, making the holy pond that had been clear for how many years become dark and ominous.

FM: Oh my, what is this exactly? Carbon dioxide and Copper sulfate can create such reaction? Could it be an exothermic reaction? (Feng Ming scratched his head).

LD: (happily said). Who cares what it is, the miracle has appeared, and we have won. (He stood straight up and loudly spoke.) Head Priestess has gone against the will of the Gods, purposely tried to harm the special person the Gods protect, making the Gods angry, turning the holy pond to black. Do you know your crime?

The Head Priestess was standing on the rock in the middle of the pond, she looked terrified at the strange event happening under her feet, and hearing Lu Dan's words, she looked up and yelled out.

HP: It's all because of a monster like you, who brought outsider here to curse this holy palace!

FM: It is Head Priestess who does not respect the Gods!

Right now, if they don't argue then when would be the best time? Feng Ming looked up and also stood up,

FM: I already said so before, if you harm me then the Heaven and Earth palace will meet with disaster. You didn't believe it before, and now even blame me for cursing the holy palace. The Gods took your devotion of praying to them for many years and were planning on forgiving you this one time. Therefore, the past three days they didn't punish you so you could quickly realized your mistake and treat me with utmost respect. However, your heart is evil, not only did you not cherish the opportunity the Gods have given you, but you tried several times to harm me. That's great; now the Gods are angry and send their punishment, destroying the Heaven and Earth pond. You have caused the holy palace of Dong Fan to be destroyed, the worst sinner, evildoer of humankind. Have you reflected on your actions, if not then the Gods will continue to punish you...

"AHHHH!"

Without ending his sentence, the Head Priestess shouted out in suffering within the fog that covered the rock in the middle of the pond. The Heaven and Earth ring fell from her hands and shattered into pieces as it hit the ground. This time, they were all frightened, the priestesses looked up staring at the Head Priestess in the distance, their eyes were scared shock.

Lu Dan glanced over at Feng Ming with admiration, silently praised Feng Ming's unparalleled intellect. Feng Ming opened his mouth in awe. The guards of the priestesses lost their strength of motion as they looked at the hard to imagine scene in front of them. The time was as if it stood still, there was only the pitiful screams of the Head Priestess echoing within the cave.

Head Priestess eventually fell into the pond and the other priestesses just held their position without moving an inch, no one dare to pull the Head Priestess out. Feng Ming was standing afar and he felt pitiful for her so he wanted to step forward, but Lu Dan pulled him back and blocked him. The Head Priestess's screams became weaker and slowly got swallowed up and disappear into the water.

LD: This matter has ended, Duke Ming followed me away. (He pulled Feng Ming who was still shock, down the stairs)

“AH!!”

Suddenly, a terrified shriek traveled to his ears, causing Feng Ming to tremble. He looked behind him and saw that the mist of fog had covered the priestesses that were on the shoreline. Feng Ming opened his eyes wide and tried to examine clearly what he saw.

FM: That fog is not water vapor! It will corrode the skin! ...It is sulfuric acid. Sulfuric acid strongly absorbs moisture and will char the skin. I knew it! That gas was not made from oxygen ions. To generate black precipitate with sulfuric acid mist, could it be hydrogen sulfide gas? I can't believe I was mistaken, believing hydrogen sulfide to be carbon dioxide.

Feng Ming couldn't believe it, if his chemistry teacher was here at this moment, his teacher would have used the book and knocked him over on the head. How would carbon dioxide and copper sulfate react then? If the gas that was brought here is carbon dioxide, then Feng Ming you probably been dead by now. Hydrogen sulfide is the best method! This time it is truly the Gods that had protected Feng Ming.

FM: Yes! It is hydrogen sulfide! The results are just like when I did the experiment from before! Combining with copper sulfate to form black precipitate and then there's sulfuric acid to create the mist...sulfuric acid! Sulfuric acid is corrosive! Lu Dan, hurry and tell them to run away from the mist! Its sulfuric acid, it will burn their skin! The Head Priestess must have got her skin eroded therefore was scared to death and fell into the pond!

Lu Dan continued to drag Feng Ming toward the Heaven and Earth palace entrance gate, as he walked he said.

LD: Isn't the will of the Gods clear enough? Duke Ming does not need to worry much.

When they finally reached outside, they could see the sunlight and Dong Fan King, along with his guards ran forward.

DFK: Advisor is successful!

Without hesitating that his guards were standing beside him, he jumped up and hugged Lu Dan.

Lu Dan grabbed hold of Dong Fan King and smiled.

LD: I've made Your Majesty worry. The Head Priestess had made the Gods angry and had to receive the punishment of the Gods. The Priestesses within the shrine have disrupted public affairs for many years, leading the Gods to dread them; the holy pond is destroyed. According to the law, they have to be punished, what does Your Majesty think?

Dong Fan King didn't have any objection, he just nodded his head.

DFK: Everything will be according to Advisor's command.

LD: Excellent. (Lu Dan nodded his head, clapped his hands once).

A strong male guard who was hiding in a corner stood out and bow in front of Lu Dan.

LD: The Great King has ordered to punish the priestesses. Take all of your subordinates to take care of it.

That male guard replied: "Understood." He made a signal with his hand and a group of quick witted soldiers with sharp weapons appeared.

Feng Ming stared wide eyed at the group of assassins who silently and swiftly enter the Heaven and Earth palace. He looked over at Lu Dan.

FM: Advisor, are you planning to...

LD: Duke Ming, please don't worry. Though those priestesses deserve death, but they are also people who have worshiped the Gods, I will definitely allow them to have an intact body corpse.

Seeing the smile on Lu Dan's face, Feng Ming's whole body seemed to have fallen into a hole of ice. The high and mighty Lu Dan in front of Feng Ming has completely changed. Feng Ming was scared and angry.

FM: Does Advisor plan on killing all of them?

The priestesses inside are about a few dozen, but the majority of them are attendants, and also the guards who are responsible in securing the Heaven and Earth palace and the shrine. The total could be more than 1000 people.

"AHH!! Help me!!"

"Please spare me..."

"Don't kill me; I'm not part of the priestess's shrine...AH!!"

"Save me!!"

The terrified screams did not stop echoing from the Heaven and Earth palace. The scent of fresh blood continued to become stronger.

There were several attendants that tried to escape through the entrance, but the guards killed them with a slice. Feng Ming felt more scared than ever before.

Lu Dan silently listened to all the screams and shouts like he was enjoying a beautiful song, a slight grin appeared on his lips. A moment later, he finally opened his eyes to look at Feng Ming and gently said.

LD: Duke Ming is not happy for the Great King and Lu Dan? Today will be commemorated by all Dong Fan people, they will remember it for years, and those days of chaos caused by the priestesses will become a part of history.

FM: You insane murderer!

Two guards quickly grabbed hold of Feng Ming's arms and held them behind his back. With a little force, Feng Ming's shoulders were hurting to the point where he was clenching his teeth to beg.

FM: Your Majesty! You have already promised me, as long as Lu Dan is free from harm, you will agree to all my conditions. I want you to release me back to Xi Lei! If you lock me up, then you are a bad person, a scumbag without morals!

Dong Fan King looked at Feng Ming and then sighed.

DFK: You have misunderstood Duke Ming; we wouldn't dare to imprison a noble person who is protected by the Gods. The holy pond is destroyed at this point, if Dong Fan King was disrespectful and caused a noble person like Duke Ming to meet with an unexpected ending, then how will we be accountable to what the Gods will say?

LD: The days that Rong Tian is not here, allow our Dong Fan King to take the responsibility of protecting Duke Ming.

CHAPTER 18

That night, the inner palace of Dong Fan was lit up brightly, and very boisterous.

Everywhere was bright with lights, wine bottles were poured, and all the beautiful maids were walking back and forth, carrying a tray in hand filled with lots of fruits, wine, and delicious foods inside the noisy banquet hall.

The nobles of the Dong Fan royal family had to bow down and follow orders of the Priestesses, but now they were laughing and were holding beautiful women in their arms and wine in another.

The one with the most towering presence was the one who came from Xi Lei, the handsome Duke Ming.

Behind the curtains of celebration, only Feng Ming was the one with a sullen face. Dong Fan King sat on the highest level, Lu Dan sat on the right and Feng Ming sat on the left. Those are the three main focus of the event, so even if Feng Ming wore a heavy mask, everyone would still notice. But it's strange, even if he were to sit in a corner, no one would ignore a well known figure like him.

Once the dance finished, the dancing female performers would step down. All the unfamiliar faces kept crowding in front of him, 9 out of 10 of them had ill intentions.

“Duke Ming, here, please allow me to offer you a cup of wine. Your greatness had used the powers of the Gods and punished those rude priestesses, allowing us to breathe a breath of fresh air.”

“That’s right, tonight if we’re not drunk, we won’t come home!”

“I have heard of Xi Lei Duke Ming’s reputation for some time and now I have a chance to meet, you are definitely a rare beauty.”

After a huge argument with Lu Dan, Feng Ming was carried by two guards and confined into a dark room for that afternoon, the anger was only barely subdued down. Just thinking that Lu Dan was actually not a good person and wasting his (FM) good intentions made him even more frustrated. The thought of Rong Tian and Xi Lei continued to relentlessly torment him inside. Finally, he decided to give himself a lesson: since he is a (hero) then he should not be deterred from the hardship in front of him.

He cannot sit idly and wait for outside help, Xi Lei Duke Ming has to stand up and save himself.

If he wants to runaway, he needs to find a method; against a stronger enemy it would be unwise to continue arguing.

Closing his eyes, he tried to erase all the terrified screams he heard inside the Heaven and Earth palace. Because of Xi Lei, no matter how much he suffered, he needed to endure it.

Because of that, he endured showing up for the event that night with the royalties of Dong Fan.

Although he secretly tried to tell himself to endure it, Feng Ming was still far from the successful Rong Tian. His mood was still not any better even staring at the beautiful women.

“Drink up.”

“Oh, here, here. With Duke Ming’s attitude like this, seem like he doesn’t like your face, Dong Ying Hou.”

“Hehe, this wine is very exquisite, how come Duke Ming don’t know how to enjoy it?”

That moment even if Feng Ming was angry, it was useless. He decided to not care much about it, he coldly rolled his eyes at all the cups of wine that were placed next to his lips and said: “I don’t want to drink.”

Seeing Feng Ming’s face and attitude, their faces slightly changed.

Xi Lei is in a turmoil, Rong Tian is missing, and the high ranking Duke Ming who was showered with love by him is now wandering within the Dong Fan inner palace. To make it simple, he is just a prisoner who they can tease as they like.

“Today is a joyous day for Dong Fan, drinking one cup is not a problem, right?” Dong Ying Hou giggled: “According to Dong Fan’s custom, refusing a person’s cup of invitation is already impolite. If an ordinary person were to be impolite to noble, then they will be punished.”

Feng Ming had heard all sorts of shameless debauchery within the palace, everyday he heard Lie Er reminded him, about how those noble, important people would wine, dine, and fondle both maids and male servants during banquets, which is nothing to be surprised about. However, those high nobility beauties who are met with trouble usually are treated the worst. Glancing around, all the dancers and musicians have stepped away. As of now, only Feng Ming is the limelight of everyone's eyes.

Though Feng Ming is not well versed as Rong Tian in reading people, but the ill intentions appeared in the eyes of all those male aristocrats looking at him, just glancing one round and it's understood. At that instance, he trembled.

Damn.

Feng Ming bit his lips; his pupils wavered, and quickly glanced over at the person who is also witnessing the scenario, Lu Dan. Feng Ming stood up from the table, facing toward the center, he bowed and said: "If Feng Ming is now a prisoner, then I request Your Majesty to send Feng Ming to the prison."

LD: Dong Ying Hou is imprudent.

Lu Dan did not wait for Dong Fan King to have a change of expression and had already answered to stop him first. A charming smile appeared on his beautiful face. He motioned Dong Ying Hou to pull back, held up a cup of wine, and walked in front of Feng Ming.

LD: Causing Duke Ming to be scared, allow Lu Dan to drink one cup to apologize. (He tilted his head and drank the whole cup in a beautiful way, and then lowered his voice) Lu Dan will use everything in my power to protect Duke Ming. But the main point: the priestesses have finally been defeated; however those royal aristocrats are becoming more fidgety. If Duke Ming wants to survive in the present situation, you will need to show a bit of your talent/ability.

How could Feng Ming not understand his meaning...with the present situation, even if he were to grit his teeth in anger, he could only pretend to be good and bad.

FM: The military strategies of Sun Zi, I will slowly let you know; however, the Art of War (of the Master Sun Zi ...different than the other one) I have not understood it all, only my master understands. If you have the ability then please request my master (Sun Zi) from the mountains and you'll have it.

LD: Then that master...

FM: I can definitely tell you where my master is residing at. (Feng Ming quickly spurred out a random location. Either way, Lu Dan wasn't a good person and this was considered a pay back, tricking him one time so he'll know for once.)

Both of them held their own intentions inside, looking at each other and grinning deeply.

With Lu Dan holding his back (supporting him); no one dared to bother Feng Ming, the dancing continued again.

Inside Feng Ming, he knew clearly that if there was a day when Lu Dan no longer sees the value of him, he will immediately toss him to those hungry salvages to play around with.

Beauty is definitely a poisonous snake, Rong Tian was right.

Oh Rong Tian...

The banquet was over; Feng Ming thought that he would be escorted back to the room this afternoon. He was followed by guards and while escorting halfway, Feng Ming finally noticed that in front of him was a place that was rather tucked away from the inner palace of Dong Fan.

Stepping inside the quarter, hanging mantle everywhere, incense scent lingering throughout the room. Four to five maids of extraordinary appearances appeared in front of him. "Duke Ming welcome."

It was apparent that these maids were specially ordered and trained by their masters; even their smiles were bright to the point of moving a person's heart.

Feng Ming was shocked, he turned to look at the guards that escorted him, their faces were emotionless, and their hands placed on their swords that were hanging around their waist.

"The Great King had ordered, the maids will attend to Duke Ming's needs. The water has been prepared, request Duke Ming to wash up."

From the confinement room on the boat, to the ominous prison of the priestess's shrine, to the scary dark room that Lu Dan temporarily locked him up, this time he was upgraded to a high class inner quarter that was warm and comfortable, causing Feng Ming to wonder non-stop.

"Advisor has said to make Duke Ming feel at home."

Following the maids into the bath house, it was cleared that a large tub of warm water had been prepared. Though Feng Ming was used to being served, but removing his clothes in front of the female attendants still cause him to blush. Embarrassed he covered his lower half and subserviently entered the tub.

"Hehe, Duke Ming is shy."

"Duke Ming's skin is very white."

After entering the tub, the maids took turn to pour water and massage him. In Xi Lei, Rong Tian had the sole privilege of washing him so there was no chance of Chiu Yue or the others being involved in that.

After half an hour in the tub, Feng Ming got out and they dressed him up in a simple but beautiful outfit, different from the extravagant outfit of Xi Lei.

While relaxing himself in the living room, he again saw Lu Dan in front of his eyes. (Feng Ming is probably thinking...give me a break!)

LD: I have come to bother Duke Ming again.

FM: Back to a comfortable place and also finally got to take a relaxing bath. (Feng Ming motioned Lu Dan to sit down and continued) When the person's mind is at ease, it is also the best time to ask questions. If Advisor did not come by this time to disturb me then you are not the Advisor that I know.

Hearing those words, Lu Dan couldn't help but blushed a little; he suddenly chuckled and shook his head.

LD: Duke Ming, oh Duke Ming, what can Lu Dan do for you so it's all good? (He sat down naturally) To kill, but someone this clever, I don't have the heart to do it. To imprison, for a person with a brilliant mind of schemes locked away, it would be a pity. To release, it would be releasing a tiger into the jungle, Xi Lei without Rong Tian, but with Duke Ming, I cannot be reckless. Just like now, I tried to sincerely please you, but Duke Ming still holds suspicion, evil intentions.

Lu Dan sighed once, his sadden smile appeared on his face. He twitched his eyebrows and was silent.

FM: Advisor is very impressive, please be straight forward, talking in circles like this, even if one is intelligent, he will have a day of being clueless. If there's anything, just say it.

Lu Dan's mood seemed to be a bit better, he gently smiled: "I request Duke Ming to hear me clearly then."

Feng Ming shrugged his shoulder.

FM: With Advisor's talent in talking, your speeches are even more powerful than the president of the United States. Please go ahead Advisor, I will listen carefully. (he yawned once and obediently sat waiting)

LD: Does Duke Ming know why Lu Dan had to kill all the priestesses?

FM: They controlled the majority of the people's heart in Dong Fan, are your political opponents. With them present, you definitely cannot take control of the bureau...No matter what your grand excuse is, it cannot avoid the usurpation of power. Advisor, you cannot lie to yourself anymore.

Lu Dan was exposed by him, but he did not have a change in expression, only said: "My Lu family of 77 mouths was killed by the priestesses."

Feng Ming was stunned.

There was an expression of hurt on Lu Dan's face as he remembered the past.

LD: My father had six brothers and sisters. That year, my 5th Aunt was Dong Fan's famous beauty. And because of that extraordinary beauty, it had brought our entire family disaster.

FM: Did some high noblemen or official spotted your fifth aunt and fancy her, but without regarding her wishes, they still force themselves on her? (Feng Ming raised his eyebrows)

Just looking at Lu Dan's face/appearance, he could quickly conclude that his 5th Aunt's beauty was not far off. Even if flower wilted, birds fell or fish dived before her, it's a pity that a beauty would still meet a disastrous fate.

Lu Dan shook his head, and bitterly replied.

LD: Dong Fan in the past had a strict hierarchy. Nobles were not able to marry normal commoners. My family was ordinary commoners, even if 5th Aunt was beautiful, if she were to enter into a noble household, she could only become a maid for those nobles to play with, there was no chance of her becoming any lowly concubine for them. The person that fancied her was the Head Priestess.

Feng Ming's face went pale.

FM: Isn't the Head Priestess, generation by generation, always have been a woman? *(Oh heavens, it is true that this era, Dong Fan allowed female and female relationship...but judging by how those old ladies acted, they don't seem to be very open minded. Or did the Head Priestess know that she needed to change the appearance of Head Priestess and wanted to find a beautiful woman to continue the role? No, it can't be, wouldn't that be forcing Lu Dan's 5th Aunt to become a nun?)*

While thinking about, Lu Dan continued in a sad tone of voice.

LD: Whether the Head Priest is a woman or not a woman, all that does not matter, right? Being a woman, at times can even be crueler than a man. My family was just a regular family. My father and uncle used carving to make a living. Those statues you see in front of Heaven and Earth palace are their masterpieces. The day the statues were completed, the Head Priestess sent an order to us, stating that 5th Aunt had been chosen and will be sacrifice at the worship altar... In one year, the priestesses performed the sacrificial ritual four times. Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, every quarter, they bring a beautiful woman of common background. That sacrificial ritual was no difference than what we had just experienced, using our blood to cleanse the Heaven and Earth ring. Therefore, the holy palace brought spiritual feel.

FM: Isn't that the cruelest sacrificial ritual! Because of that, did your 5th Aunt run away causing the entire family to meet with disaster?

LD: The choice of the Gods is something that cannot be avoided. My father and my uncle were very appreciative of that honor. They escorted 5th Aunt to the Heaven and Earth palace, and even received the priestesses' gifts. Those gifts would allow our entire family to overcome three cold winters.

Hearing up to that point, Feng Ming could only opened his mouth: "Then..."

LD: But the one thing none of us could have imagined was that before 5th Aunt was carried forth towards the worship alter, the priestesses found out that...she was no longer a virgin.

"What?"

LD: That was a huge sin towards the Gods; the Head Priestess was very upset. Our entire family was brought in front of the Heaven and Earth palace without knowing what happened. One priestess came forth and gave orders according to the Head Priestess for the guards to behead the whole family at that place. (Lu Dan closed his eyes) It was strange, although our 5th Aunt was a well known famous beauty, but she was just a commoner, there was nowhere for her to look for support, don't know when she had been raped by some rich bastard. It's a pity that she did not dare to tell anyone and at the end, because of that, all 77 people of my family were forced at death's door. Those two statues in front of the Heaven and Earth palace were then stained with the blood of my father and uncles, even my mother, brothers and sister...Didn't Duke Ming noticed those blood stains that are still there?

On his face, he had always worn a kind smile in the beginning, but now it has made people look at it with a sudden coldness deep within one's bones.

Feng Ming shivered.

Seventy seven people's lives, of course that number did not compare to the those that had died within the priestess's shrine that day, but...looking back, those people were blood relatives of Lu Dan. That deep revenge of his is not easy to calculate.

LD: Interestingly, the last minute, I was taken away from my family, escaping that bloodshed fate. I, stood on the high platform of the Heaven and Earth palace. Witnessing the blood flowing onto the ground. Hearing the terrified screams of my loved ones. That time, I was little, even one a bit of struggling, I didn't even have. And just like that, I stood frozen and watched. (Lu Dan opened his eyes wide, looked straight at Feng Ming) Duke Ming is intelligent; you can guess why I was spared by them, could you?

Feng Ming was shocked, and refused to divulge his own guess. Lu Dan's face eased out and a beautiful smile appeared.

LD: My image was beautiful. They, every year and month confined themselves within the Heaven and Earth palace, so they have to find something fun to play around with to exploit their sexual desires that they don't dare to let the world know. The Gods had allowed me to witness a scene that can cause many people to be frightful to the point of crying, they have saved me from under the knife, they have allowed me to witness those evil priestess's doings, in order to tell me, that those priestesses are not representatives of the Gods. They have always disrespect the Gods, and so hoping one day, I would extinguished that rotted core for Dong Fan.

Feng Ming looked at his smile and was unable to say a single word.

LD: I could never guess the will of the Gods. Five years later, they (the Gods) had allowed me to meet the Great King.

FM: Advisor, please stop.

Feng Ming could not bear the painful memories Lu Dan is recalling again. Just hearing a bit about it, his whole body trembled to the point that he was willing to forgive all the evilness Lu Dan had done.

FM: The past that Advisor had to go through was very painful indeed, but I'm unrelated to it. Also, the revenge Advisor had had been avenged, the priestesses are no more. There's only one thing, what is Advisor planning on doing with me? Advisor can't simply just want the book on Art of War.

LD: It's very simple. I just need your heart, Duke Ming.

=====

FM: My heart?

Feng Ming can't help but covered his chest with his hands. Dong Fan is famous for their spiritual incantation and he had taste a bit of what Lu Dan can do. He knows that this beautiful person who seems beautiful and gentle has in fact done outrageous things so he needs to be on full alert.

LD: Duke Ming has misunderstood. (Lu Dan laughed) What Lu Dan mean is we hope Duke Ming will submit to Dong Fan. When Xi Lei King was alive, Lu Dan would have never thought about this. However, I will not lie to Duke Ming, Lu Dan had already decided that no matter the outcome, after completely making use of Duke Ming, I was planning on killing you immediately.

Seeing that Feng Ming's face twitched, Lu Dan's tone of voice softens.

LD: As of now, Xi Lei King is no more. This world is huge, but Duke Ming no longer has a place to return to. Lu Dan is willing to give all of Dong Fan's power, in order for Duke Ming to stay beside the Great King and advise him. With the eleven kingdoms still standing, who else is like Dong Fan King, able to give Duke Ming a high position that no one is able to reach for, just like when you were in Xi Lei?

FM: I thought...awhile ago I was still a prisoner with a crime, having the whole Dong Fan royalty look down upon, even Advisor came to mock me. So why do you change your mind now?

LD: That banquet was just for show. I just wanted Duke Ming to understand that after the priestesses are destroyed, the fight and court battles within Dong Fan is no difference than all the other kingdoms. The position of the Great King is not really secure, if Duke Ming wants to survive here, you cannot just rely on me, for even the Great King cannot fully protect your safety. Duke Ming has to learn how to protect yourself, you have to use your strength to stay beside the Great King and protect him, just like how you have protected the Xi Lei King, help him become a truly Great King that the history books will mention about him for 1000 of years to come, someone to idolize.

Feng Ming lowered his eyes and did not answer. Lu Dan looked at him for awhile and then continued.

LD: Duke Ming's silence has only let me know what you are currently thinking inside.

He stood up and walked over in front of Feng Ming, bowed down and examined his facial expression.

LD: Could it be that Duke Ming still holds a slight hope that Xi Lei King is still alive; therefore, you do not want to think about Lu Dan's offer, is that right?

Feng Ming could not hide what he was thinking inside; he raised his eyebrows and looked up at Lu Dan.

LD: That day, when we received the news, I have sent people to investigate and they have finally come back now. Duke Ming should not torture yourself anymore, Xi Lei really did have a change of ruler, the current king is now Great King Rong Tong. He had brought gifts here in response to my help, causing Rong Tian's mind to be distracted and allowing this change in outcome and Rong Tian's defeat. The gift that Xi Lei had brought here from afar, does Duke Ming have the interest in finding out what it is?

Without waiting for Feng Ming to answer, Lu Dan coughed and clapped his hands, after those signals finished, two maids came inside, in their hands they were holding an item case, covered by a yellow cloth in which Feng Ming could not figure out what it was.

The maids placed the item case on the table and excused themselves.

Lu Dan came in front of the item case and pulled off the cloth that was covering it.

On the table were precious jewels and jades shining brightly blurring one's eyes, but Feng Ming was not interested in them, his eyes glanced over and focused on one item, his whole body in shock. Lu Dan followed his eyes, he held up an item from the jewelry around, an extraordinary jaded ring.

LD: This...is it something that Rong Tian usually wears?

FM: Rong Tian is a Great King, every day his daily wears are plentiful, one or two items being discovered outside, what is there to be surprised about? What if he awarded his people?

Lu Dan lowered his eyes and chuckled.

LD: Then, I invite Duke Ming to examine that item over there.

Feng Ming stared at the item case covered with a yellow cloth on the opposite side. He knew that the item inside is something that he did not want to see. Clenching his teeth, uncovering the yellow cloth with his own hands, examining closely, he trembled and inhaled a large breath of air, his eyes widened like they were about to fall out.

LD: How is it? This item can't be something that can easily leave the Xi Lei palace and wanders outside, right? Xi Lei already have a change of ruler; Duke Ming cannot keep believing it isn't so.

Every finger of Feng Ming trembled, grabbing hold of the cold table like ice. If they were not the ruler of Xi Lei, then they would never gift this item. If Rong Tian was still alive, he would never give this item to Dong Fan.

Unparallel sword, one of the precious items of Xi Lei, the kingdom's most valued treasure since the beginning of Xi Lei's royal existence. When Xi Lei was first established, long ago, it was because of this unparallel sword.

Unparallel sword, a paired sword, no one can separate. If separated, two people will hold onto one, if one met with unexpected disaster, he will commit suicide; the person left will also perish.

That paired sword carried a curse from the blood of the first King that established the kingdom. Rong Tian also used it to express his affection to Feng Ming, but because of the bad omen, after Feng Ming returned to the palace; he had brought the item back to the enshrined area in the back of Xi Lei's palace.

That day when Official Xia explained the origin of the unparallel sword to him, it was still fresh in his mind.

Official Xia is dead and ... what about Rong Tian?

FM: Xi Lei...really have a change of ruler? The present king of Xi Lei is Tong Er? *No matter how Rong Tian is, he will never hand over the unparallel sword to other people, the item of affection between him and Feng Ming.*

LD: Yes. The new prime minister is also from the Tong family.

Lu Dan slowly walked next to Feng Ming, using his fingers he gently stroked the ice cold face of Feng Ming and harshly sighed.

LD: Seeing Duke Ming suffer like this, Lu Dan feels deeply guilty, can't Duke Ming realize that Lu Dan also act in unpredictable ways, what I'm thinking is hard to grasp? So today, Lu Dan will not beat around the bush with Duke Ming anymore. I want to talk directly to Duke Ming about one condition.

A gentle smile appeared on his beautiful face with a bit of seriousness.

Feng Ming was still looking at the unparallel sword; he was lost in his thoughts, remembering all the smiles of Rong Tian, all those days and months running around within the Prince's quarter along with Chiu Lan, Lie Er, and the rest.

Feng Ming is different from Lu Dan; he still believes in Rong Tian, he cannot easily believe that Rong Tian is dead. But...the unparallel sword is here, in front of his eyes, it was telling him the cruel reality, Xi Lei had a major change.

Could it be that while Feng Ming is waiting here in hope for Rong Tian to save him, Rong Tian is also suffering at some unknown place by himself?

FM: What more of me is there for you to take advantage of, for Advisor to use much effort in offering a condition with me?

LD: Why doesn't Duke Ming listen to what Lu Dan's condition is? Not only the status, the power, to conclude it is a position under one person but above thousands next to the Great King, is that something that Duke Ming wish for?

Feng Ming fingers clenched tightly at the unparallel sword, his face turned pale and he responded.

FM: Because of the military strategies, Advisor will not sacrifice a huge price like that. There must be something more to it. If Advisor still does not want to tell me truthfully, how can Feng Ming believe your sincere feelings?

LD: Hearing Feng Ming's words, I know that you have been moved. It's only natural, Xi Lei has come to this, if Duke Ming wishes for revenge, you have to control a strong army, Lu Dan's offer has unintentionally given you the best option.

He slowly walked towards the entrance, looking at the scenery outside. It was past midnight, the snow started to fall. Lu Dan suddenly turned around, looking at Feng Ming.

LD: The three things that I want to complete for the Great King, I have completed two of them. One, to be free of Xi Lei's threat against Dong Fan, this was completed smoothly that even I couldn't believe such thing; the second one is to defeat the priestesses. The third one is fix the extreme corruption within Dong Fan. Regain an aristocratic abjection (Feng Ming) to understand the art, to deal with the royal nobles with evil intentions within the court, help Dong Fan King to eradicate the barriers and using the military strategies to transform the army, increase the strength of Dong Fan, making Dong Fan the prime ruler of all 11 kingdoms.

Feng Ming nodded and sighed.

FM: No wonder Advisor is the main support of Dong Fan. With you beside the Great King, what's there to be worry about becoming a reputable ruler of the world?

LD: Duke Ming is wrong. The third thing is I need to find someone to replace me, to be beside the Great King, before this body waste away.

It was as if Feng Ming heard the bells of the Gods, he stood frozen in place.

FM: Advisor's meaning is...

LD: Suffering under the hands of the priestesses for five years, my strength has been greatly diminished. When I was beside the Great King, I didn't want other people to harm him so in order to clear the shame and dirtied his name, I had to be aware of people, hurt people, and create schemes without a day of rest. A light that had long been put out, how can it continue running nonstop? Out of all the people I have met, only Duke Ming is the one that I respect to a certain point, Duke Ming is special than other people, who isn't someone who use tricks to purposely harm people, but yet hard to defeat. With you beside the Great King, I would be very reassured.

Seeing Feng Ming's wide eyes, Lu Dan chuckled and continued.

LD: Comparing to Lu Dan, Duke Ming can easily allow others to like you. Even though Lu Dan is beautiful, I know that my temperament is very cold, those who have been with me for a long time will feel scared to the depths of their hearts, except for the Great King...he never holds anything against me.

Feng Ming saw Lu Dan coming closer to him, his beautiful face like a painting, an undescribable beauty with a man's fragrance scent blowing into Feng Ming's face, causing Feng Ming's heart to beat uncontrollably. He couldn't help but thought about him and Rong Tian.

If he was going to die, would he be kind enough to find another person to be beside Rong Tian, to replace himself?

His heart was filled with pain and bitterness that he can't speak of, Feng Ming closed his eyes and looked away.

FM: Advisor speak as if it's very simple, replacing your position, is that something that can be easily done?

LD: As long as Duke Ming agrees, Lu Dan will have a method for this plan to succeed. As for the Great King, I will slowly persuade him. As for the court, I will slowly hand over the power to Duke Ming. As for Duke Ming... (Lu Dan glanced over at Feng Ming with hidden intentions) I will definitely have a method for Duke Ming to wholeheartedly protect the Great King. (talking midway, Lu Dan straightened himself up) Tonight I will only speak up to here. Duke Ming please quickly rest. Lu Dan has already prepared my best guards to stay here and protect you; I guarantee that no one will be able to bother Duke Ming.

FM: Those gifts that Xi Lei had brought...

LD: I gift them back to Duke Ming.

Feng Ming suddenly held onto the unparallel sword and shouted out while running towards the entrance to call out to Lu Dan.

FM: Why is there only one sword?

LD: The other sword of course resides with the Great King. If Duke Ming agrees with Lu Dan's condition, then please wear the unparallel sword on you. When the owner of the unparallel sword wears it on him, then the spell will be effective. Only when the two people both agree to toss away the paired swords will the curse disappear. Duke Ming, please rethink clearly.

And so Lu Dan left, the snow outside continued to fall heavily.

That night, Feng Ming did not sleep; he was spinning the jade ring of Rong Tian on the item case, and thinking about each word of Lu Dan.

Perhaps the person that has extraordinary knowledge of military strategies in this world is not Rong Tian, is not Ruo Yan, and is not him, not Feng Ming, but instead is Lu Dan. Lu Dan seems to act erratically, but no one can predict his ulterior motives and also, he is always taking little steps to use Feng Ming, in order to achieve his desired purpose.

Though there were certain events out of his expectations, but in the end, Lu Dan was still the winner.

And yet that kind of person, can become a fire that is put out, a bright light that can blurred one's eyes and yet there would be a day for that person to disappear.

FM: Rong Tian, what should I do?

Feng Ming leaned against the window, looking out at the snow fall.

FM: I don't believe that you have left me. I must survive...

Xi Lei, perhaps is filled with reign of terror. If I want to help you, I have to become stronger.

A sudden pain was felt; Feng Ming looked down and noticed blood coming from a wound where he held the unparallel sword tightly.

Rong Tian, what is your condition right now?

FM: I have never been a strong person. I was never capable of fighting the internal chaos within the palace...But...if I can control the forces of Dong Fan in my hands, then at the appropriate time, I will be able to help you, right?

That, was Lu Dan's trap.

It was so clear in front of his eyes, but how can he not jump into it. Feng Ming wiped his tears and silently held onto the unparallel sword.

In a blink of an eye, it seems that he had returned to the Crown Prince's quarter, recalling those times when he was still within Xi Lei's inner palace, playing around and arguing with Rong Tian each day.

The words of Official Xia still rang in his ears.

"The Unparallel Sword is the only one in the world, but is a pair of swords. According to historical records, the An Brothers protected one area and became enemies with this monster. The battle between them lasted for years, and the brothers tried many different methods but could not defeat the monster and so they decided to use their last resort...The two brothers used magic spells, they took about ten years, using their blood to create a pair of swords under a peerless spell. When the An Brothers created the swords, they placed a spell on the unparallel swords with the following: This sword despite being a pair, but their fate entwines with the owner. Those that hold the sword, if one dies, then the other will perish. The unparallel sword went through much effort in order to reach the monster's hands; the other sword was kept by the older brother. When the older brother committed suicide, the monster also died. The younger brother that survived conquered that area, and soon that place populated and became Xi Lei, that person was the first Great King of Xi Lei. The unparallel sword returned to the hands of the Great King and was enshrined within the inner palace, never to appear again."

Those swords established the kingdom Xi Lei.

Rong Tian, I am not only your Feng Ming, but I am also Duke Ming of Xi Lei.

If Lu Dan can pour his whole heart and soul because of Dong Fan King, then I, how can I be useless to the point that is not even worth in comparison to the unparallel sword?

Holding onto the sword within his embrace, his hand dripped with blood.

He opened up the windows and shouted loudly. The snow outside found its way inside.

CHAPTER 19

The next day, snow fell across the sky.

The gates of the inner palace opened again and those court officials of last night entered with their regular serious faces.

Dong Fan King was sitting in the middle of the court with his crown placed on his head. After the priestesses have been defeated, he finally regained sole power. From today onward, in Dong Fan there will no longer be anyone who dares to oppose this young ruler.

The two sides of Dong Fan King held a high position for two people, on the right was Lu Dan and the left was empty. That seat belonged to the former Head Priestess.

“Long live Your Majesty!” After making performing their greeting, the officials separated into two rows and returned to their position.

DFK: My beloved officials, the priestesses had disrespect the Gods, disregarded the person that the Gods protected; therefore, they had been punished. They’ve caused the clear blue pond of mine to turn into a complete black mess. This event all of you are aware. (He glances across the officials standing below and his gentle gaze paused at Lu Dan) The priestesses had brought disaster to the court for a long time; Advisor had to suffer quite a lot. The next matter, I’ll allow Advisor to announce it to all of you.

LD: The Head Priestess and the other priestesses knew that they have violated the Gods and so they have committed suicide to apologize. The guards and female attendants within the worship shrine also received the same outcome and have been taken care of. The holy pond is destroyed; it is a disgrace that Dong Fan can never wash away. The priestesses had created this disaster, even if the reason was because they have harm the special person that the Gods had protected, we cannot ignore the related evil things that the priestesses had created for Dong Fan from before until now. Within the court officials here, there is also a portion of you who have joined the priestesses in creating disasters like [names of officials]...

Lu Dan slowly call out the names, each word clearly and coldly chuckled.

LD: All these people did not respect the Great King, joined forces with the priestesses to cause chaos within Dong Fan courts, yesterday they've received their punishment.

Everyone secretly looked up around them, it was clear that they did not see those people that Lu Dan had mentioned. Thinking about their colleagues who had created sins against Lu Dan before, they couldn't imagine where their bodies would be thrown to. Those scared officials trembled, trying to remember if they had ever offended Lu Dan in any way.

Lu Dan didn't care for the pale face officials standing below, he softly chuckled.

LD: The priestesses were servants of the Gods, they were supposed to hide away in a place that no one will see, and focused on worshiping the Gods. They shouldn't have involved themselves with court affairs of the Great King. Dong Fan is a kingdom that greatly worshiped the Gods, it cannot have one day without priests. Therefore, those officials that have created sins, they should have been executed, but I chose to spare their lives so that they will enter the Heaven and Earth palace and continue worshiping the Gods, hopefully they will be cleansed of their crimes by using their efforts to repay the Gods and Dong Fan.

Lu Dan spoke up to there and clapped his hands twice. A group of young men and women, separated into two rows and walked in single file.

LD: These are the future priests and priestesses of Dong Fan, they are not allowed to step foot outside of the Heaven and Earth palace. Whoever dares to speak of court affairs will be executed.

Lu Dan looked at all the people around and softly asked.

LD: So, does anyone have anything to say?

All of them were already scared so no one dares to say a single word. There were a few nobles that were dissatisfied with Lu Dan, but they also suffered from the oppression of the priestesses. They knew that if one day the priestesses were to involve themselves in court affairs once more, then the consequences would be unpredictable, therefore, no one dares to argue with Lu Dan on this matter.

The court hall was silent and there was no objection.

LD: In addition, there are a few items from the priestess's shrine used within the Heaven and Earth palace that have not been replaced for a long time. The huge drum made of skin is now old. I have ordered that the sinners who were taken care of last night to have their skin fully removed and be used for the face of the drum so the Gods will understand how we punish our sinners.

Everyone in the court hall was stunned. In addition to a small handful of people, no one knew which officials were executed last night and had been taken away to be skinned alive. This was a horrible punishment, causing everyone to be terrified. Their eyes glanced up at Lu Dan with a bit more fright.

LD: This matter, does anyone have any objections?

There was a moment of silence.

LD: If there is no objections then...

“Advisor, please hold on.” An old hoarse voice echoed forth. Tian Qing Si, an official in charge of Agriculture responded.

TQS: Heaven and Earth palace is a pure and holy place, using human skin for the face of the drums, it seems... (Feeling as if a bunch of eyes were staring at him and with the pressured atmosphere, Tian Qing Si’s voice became softer.)

LD: It seems what? (Lu Dan gave him a sincere smile and stared at him) Say it.

TQS: I...I feel that using the regular buffalo skin is better. Your Majesty, please reconsider. (He swallowed once, Tian Qing Si didn’t dare to make eye contact with Lu Dan, he glanced over at Jun Ling Si (who was chief of the military division), who was standing in the opposite direction and then looked respectful at Dong Fan King.)

DFK: The Gods cherish your kindness Tian Qing Si, your worries is reasonable. However, Advisor’s purpose for doing so was to warn those who has the heart to rebel and that is the best method to secure peace within Dong Fan. When a kingdom is at peace then it can survive better, understand deeper a bit, Advisor’s decision is honestly the kindest towards the innocent commoners of Dong Fan.

TQS: This matter...

Tian Qing Si was trembling, he wanted to say more but suddenly saw Jun Ling Si’s gaze, he slowly paused, swallowing the words he wanted to say back inside.

TQS: You’re correct. Your Majesty had thought deeply about this, and Advisor was thoughtful in doing so. (He bowed his head and returned to his position within the crowd)

Lu Dan saw that there were no longer any more objections; a smile appeared on his face.

LD: If everyone has no other objections, the matter of the priestesses and those involved will be punished accordingly as decided. Then, if anyone else has anything to report to the Great King, please do so.

Everyone looked at each other and no one said a single word.

LD: Is there no one who wants to report? Then...

“Hold on.” Within the crowd, there was a figure of tall strong person who stepped forth, a middle aged man. “Your Majesty, I have a few words.”

LD: Jun Ling Si has something to report.

Jun Ling Si glanced over at Lu Dan and then faced Dong Fan King.

JLS: I would like to ask Your Majesty, the people within the priestess’s shrine cannot participate in court affairs, then the position of the Head Priestess will be vacant. (He pointed at the empty

seat next to Dong Fan King) I believe that the important matter right now is to nominate someone for the new position.

Jun Ling Si is the person in charge of the military army of Dong Fan, that position had for many generations belonged to the Jun Family, and apparently all the famous generals of Dong Fan had all came from the Jun Family. Jun Ling Si, Jun Qing had always spoke with care, dealt with matters with fairness, even the former Head Priestess did not dare to provoke him. When he spoke right now, even Dong Fan King had to also give him some respect.

DFK: Having someone like Advisor, is more than a 1000 useless people. (he softly chuckled) The important matters, I will let Advisor handle them.

Jun Qing's figure was tall and big, standing in the court hall, he was taller than the rest. After hearing the response of Dong Fan King, he stubbornly said.

JQ: Next to the Your Majesty, you need to have at least two important people, this is the law of Dong Fan for the past hundreds of years and cannot undo otherwise. Besides Advisor, we are still missing one more person.

After finishing his sentence, everyone knew that Jun Qing was pushing the powers of Lu Dan.

The position next to Dong Fan King, everyone knew belonged to the previous Head Priestess. The person who received this position will be seen on the same level as Lu Dan within the courts of Dong Fan.

If that position is left vacant then Lu Dan will no longer have an opponent.

After defeating his biggest opponent, which were the priestesses, Lu Dan's power was like the sun, and during this time Jun Qing dared to suppress Lu Dan's power, within Dong Fan, other than Jun Ling Si, no other person was bold enough to do so.

Everyone secretly looked over at Lu Dan's expression; they saw that he did not say a word, no sudden changes.

Dong Fan King knew that Jun Ling Si's temper was like that, so he wasn't mad, but gently replied.

DFK: Jun Ling Si has a point. However, the matter of choosing the person for this position isn't something that can be done within a short amount of time. If the decision is in haste, then it might result in the same disaster as the Head Priestess. I believe we can consider this another time.

JQ: Your Majesty. Choosing the right candidate is not an easy task, but for one person to assist with the national affairs, it will be of great harm to the kingdom. I request Your Majesty to not delay this matter.

His words were stern, causing Dong Fan King to lose his face a bit.

DFK: General Jun, this matter...

Jun Qing is the commander of the country's army therefore Dong Fan King has to give him some respect. In his mind, he knew that if he were to agree to the election, then it would indirectly mean that he agreed for them to suppress Lu Dan. He glanced over at Lu Dan who does not appear to have any reaction; Dong Fan King was flustered.

Within a moment of hesitation, a young official stepped out below and stood behind Jun Qing: "Your Majesty, I agreed with Jun Ling Si's suggestion."

"I also agreed with Jun Ling Si's suggestion."

"I also agreed."

"I also agreed."

"...."

More than ten officials stood out, all were affiliated with the military division. Dong Fan King closed his eyes and opened them up again only to look over at Lu Dan and ask for his decision.

LD: What Jun Ling Si said is not completely not reasonable; however the timing is quite urgent. Lu Dan really cannot think of anyone that is a good candidate. This matter I request Your Majesty to decide.

A bunch of officials nominated Jun Qing for the position and during that, Lu Dan decided to call out the poor Tian Qing Si to hear his response regarding Jun Qing being the only good candidate for the position. Tian Qing Si didn't want to offend both parties so he responded that for this matter that relates to national affairs, it would be best for the Great King to make the decision.

Lu Dan nodded and told Dong Fan King that he also thinks that Jun Qing would be a good fit for the position. After saying that, all of the officials were surprised that Lu Dan would agree to such things especially nominating someone who could suppress his power.

Dong Fan King then asked Lu Dan again whether he agrees to choose Jun Qing for the position.

LD: I believe Jun Ling Si is a perfect candidate for the position because he is an extraordinary official of Dong Fan, however.... Jun Ling Si's strength is in protecting the city, training the army, if Jun Ling Si takes on the position, Dong Fan will become peaceful, but if we want to expand and prosper, Lu Dan does not hold much hope.

Jun Qing stood in silence, after hearing that he was not angry; instead, he answered politely: "Jun Qing's strength is inferior to Advisor."

LD: Jun Ling Si has misunderstood. Although Lu Dan is egotistic, I do not dare to boast about myself. Your Majesty, I would like to appoint another special person who is residing in Dong Fan, this person's intelligence and schemes, everyone in this world already knows about, no one can disagree otherwise, if this person can become an assistant to Dong Fan then it will be of great fortune for us.

DFK: Advisor plans on nominating Xi Lei Duke Ming.

LD: Rong Tian is dead, Feng Ming has no other place to go, he is the talented person that the Gods had sent to Dong Fan.

Chang Yen (another general) noticed that the situation had change dramatically, he understood that Dong Fan King would always follow every word of Lu Dan so he quickly asked.

CY: Duke Ming is not an official of Dong Fan, how can he become an assistant to Dong Fan? I request Your Majesty to think this through clearly.

LD: What General Chang Yen said is reasonable. This is the reason why Lu Dan hesitated about nominating Duke Ming. His talent is extraordinary, but cannot be of use, it's a pity. Your Majesty, in order to guarantee safety, I still believe that nominating Jun Ling Si for the position is best.

DFK: If that's so, then....

Knowing that what Lu Dan said what to hurt his ego, Jun Qing decided to put in some words.

JQ: The assistant position for Dong Fan is very important; therefore, we must find a good candidate for it. The Duke Ming that is infamous around the world is now in Dong Fan, it shouldn't be a shame. Duke Ming can foresee outcomes like a prophet; I have only heard rumors and have not seen with my own eyes. In this world, many people have followed bad rumors, if Dong Fan were to nominate someone with only a rumored title to serve as an assistant; wouldn't that be a laughing matter to others?

DFK: What you have mentioned is reasonable, then according to you how will you solve this?

JQ: I believe we need to examine Duke Ming's talent carefully, if his talent is extraordinary and is clearly loyal to Dong Fan then we can naturally nominate him for the position. If the result causes disappointment to others then we'll have to choose another for the position.

Even though Jun Qing did not state it aloud, everyone knew clearly that if the position were reinstated again, then it will belong to only Jun Qing.

DFK: What you said is correct. What does Advisor think?

LD: Everything is for Your Majesty to decide.

DFK: Alright. It will be three months time. Within these three months, we will allow Duke Ming to participate in national affairs of Dong Fan so then we can determine Duke Ming's ability and see if he can increase Dong Fan's military strength even more than before.

JQ: Duke Ming is not familiar with Dong Fan's military. I request Your Majesty to allow Jun Qing to assist at this end.

DFK: Of course.

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Lu Dan came to meet Duke Ming to discuss to him about the good news. Feng Ming however did not view it as good news and told Lu Dan that because of this he had created another enemy. Lu Dan reassured Feng Ming that within three months, nothing will happen to Feng Ming since Jun Qing is a well respected commander and if he agreed to assist Feng Ming in regarding Dong Fan's military division then he will not allow anything to happen to Feng Ming. However, after the three months are up and Feng Ming had not display any talents or ability then Jun Qing could easily suggest the Great King to execute Feng Ming if he wanted to. Hearing this, Feng Ming was scared but then asked Lu Dan if he is willing to allow him to die since Dong Fan King also has the unparallel sword.

LD: Duke Ming has misunderstood. Lu Dan only stated that the other unparallel sword is somewhere near the Great King, I did not said that the Great King is wearing it on him. Duke Ming shouldn't worried, once Duke Ming has passed the three months mark and demonstrate your ability and loyalty to Dong Fan, then the Great King will wear the unparallel sword on him. When that time comes, all those who are loyal to the Great King will protect Duke Ming.

FM: You are not teasing me are you?

LD: Lu Dan does not like to tease. The Great King is the most important person of Lu Dan's life. Lu Dan does not want to carelessly give him to another person. Luckily, Duke Ming has passed many trials of Lu Dan. If you can pass this life and death trial, then you will become the perfect person in my mind.

FM: I have never wanted to be the person of your choosing.

A moment later, someone came with the orders of the Great King and Feng Ming received the order of what Lu Dan discussed with him earlier. Afterwards, Feng Ming tried to think of a plan to handle Jun Qing, but after some time of thinking he tired himself out and took a nap.

While still dreaming, Feng Ming heard someone calling his name: "Duke Ming? Duke Ming?" It was a male voice and that person was shaking him.

"Duke Ming? Hurry and wake up."

"Who's there inside?" A guard standing watch outside felt as if he saw something and yelled out.

When Feng Ming opened his eyes everything was the same as before, two female attendants came in and asked if Feng Ming needed anything. He just told them that he was probably talking in his sleep. He tried to remember that voice and thought that it sounded like Rong Hu, but he couldn't make sure since he was in a sleeping state and thought it must be because he misses everyone from Xi Lei therefore his dream had become strange.

The guards searched the room but couldn't find anything out of the ordinary. They then tell Feng Ming to rest and not to worry since they will be on the lookout for anything suspicious. That night, Feng Ming couldn't sleep much.

The next day, Feng Ming was called up early and the female attendant informed him that Jun Ling Si had ordered General Chang Yen to come and request for Duke Ming to participate in the

meeting. She then tells Feng Ming that Jun Ling Si is very strict and one time because a soldier was late to the meeting, his feet were chopped off.

Feng Ming was half asleep while his servants were dressing him and was in a rush to leave. One of the female attendants giggled and told Feng Ming that he shouldn't be in a haste and brought over a red cloak. "Yesterday, Advisor had left this, saying that Duke Ming is afraid of the cold and if he goes outside, he will need to wear something warmer."

Didn't know what material the woven cloak was made of, but it was of good quality and the fur made from a very rare kind of white fox fur. When wearing upon oneself, it was very warm and comfortable.

Although Feng Ming knew that Lu Dan just wanted to buy his loyalty, he couldn't help but admired Lu Dan's sense of thoughtfulness.

While looking around, Feng Ming noticed a general standing outside and he thought to himself that that person must be Chang Yen.

From today onward, whoever is in the Dong Fan's military division can all become his enemy, seeing that hard to tease figure, even if Feng Ming did not had enough sleep, he was immediately awoke for some portion, he straighten himself upward, hid his sleepy face, and use the high and mighty attitude of royalty that Rong Tian had taught him before to walk towards that person.

FM: You must be General Chang Yen. I have let General waited long enough. (Feng Ming gave him a bright smile of intimacy)

Chang Yen turned himself around, his sharp eyes piercing directly at Feng Ming, after seeing a young handsome face, he couldn't help but became startled. He didn't participate in that banquet the other night in the inner palace, so he only heard stories about Feng Ming. He heard people complimenting how handsome Feng Ming is and just thought that he would have the same sinister look as Lu Dan, but when seeing him now, he is someone with a natural kind demeanor.

It would be difficult for anyone to have ill feelings towards a comfortable smile with no evidence of hidden intentions, compare to the dark smile of Lu Dan, this smile appeared gentle filled with confidence.

Feng Ming was being examined by Chang Yen from top to bottom.

FM: General Chang Yen is someone who is tall and filled with strength, you seemed to be a someone who is very good at interrogating a spy of a military opponent, haha, because just having General Chang Yen's large eyes looking back and forth like this, [a spy] cannot hide any secrets.

Chang Yen felt uncomfortable and withdrawn his glances.

CY: Commander Jun has been waiting in the meeting hall discussing with other generals from the military division, I request Duke Ming to come with me.

Chang Yen and Duke Ming walked to the meeting hall, which was somewhat farther than what Feng Ming was used to so Chang Yen ended up slowing down his pace for Feng Ming to catch up. After walking for some time, Feng Ming asked Chang Yen how much longer, in which Chang Yen stated that it's just up ahead.

Feng Ming followed Chang Yen and stepped inside the large gates. The meeting hall was filled with generals, separated in an orderly right and left side. Standing behind them were either their subordinate or lieutenants. The majority of them were very young, but yet very vibrant.

The person sitting in the central point was a tall man with deep set of eyes, showing unmatched confidence. He was looking down and examining carefully at a set of documents, on his left shoulder, he wore a purple belt, which made it apparent that he was the most senior commander of Dong Fan military force.

When Feng Ming and Chang Yen entered, all of their eyes fell upon Feng Ming. These were the people who putted their all on the battlefields; their eyes were even sharper than regular people. Being surrounded and stared upon by them, even though Feng Ming was used to being stared at, he could feel the atmosphere around him turned heavy, even breathing was a bit difficult.

The only person that didn't bother to look at Feng Ming was Jun Ling Si, Jun Qing who was sitting straight in the middle.

CY: Jun Ling Si, Duke Ming has arrived.

Jun Qing didn't care much for his "adversary" and a moment later, he slowly put down the documents in his hands and lifted his head to look at Feng Ming.

Feng Ming was standing proudly and met his direct gaze. Jun Qing motioned his hand: "Please sit down, Duke Ming."

Earlier, a guard had set up the table. Don't know whether if it was Jun Qing's idea or not, but the seating was next to the door, making Feng Ming sit in a way directly facing Jun Qing, while the other generals sat on both sides. In this position, Feng Ming and Jun Qing's "adversary battle" could be displayed for everyone to see.

Feng Ming was extremely uncomfortable when sitting in that position, he smiled at Jun Qing.

FM: Jun Ling Si requested for my presence this early to attend the meeting; I'm not sure what we will be discussing about?

Glancing around, they are all Jun Qing's people, each one of them could easily kill him with just one swallow. Why is the situation right now compared to being imprisoned in the Heaven and Earth palace has not improved a bit?

"You call this early?" One general who looked to be around his fifties answered. "Huh, we have waited for an entire hour for one person already."

JQ: Xie Guang, Duke Ming is a guest of the Great King, invited here to attend the meeting, please don't be rude.

When Jun Qing spoke, the general immediately closed his mouth and dare not to utter another word.

Chang Yen was sitting on the left side of Jun Qing, seems to be a position directly below of Jun Qing.

CY: Today's meeting was mainly to discuss about training matters. All of the generals have brought up some methods of training the troops and wrote their ideas on these documents for Jun Ling Si to look over.

FM: Training troops? Jun Ling Si is the strongest military commander of Dong Fan, if we're talking about training troops, you must have lots of methods already.

JQ: The main point of this meeting today is to discuss about training troops, all the other generals have written down their opinion on the matter, as of right now we are still missing Duke Ming's opinion.

There were more than ten dangerous piercing eyes staring at him. Feng Ming looked at the serious face of Jun Qing and he knew he could not avoid this if he wanted to. He had to prepare himself and displayed a natural smile on his face.

FM: Please don't be in a hurry, Jun Ling Si. Let me begin by talking a little about some of the training methods you've came up with. All of your generals thought about training methods, but that is nothing more than to improve a set of skills. Something along the line of having serious discipline, rewarding and punishing accordingly, generals should be role models for the soldiers, and maintaining morale. It is all of these, am I right?

Everyone's faces changed color.

Feng Ming can speak of all these things because he had learned them from Rong Tian, so he only guessed that all the other kingdoms had similar outlook on training methods and he was right. For Feng Ming to easily tell them (about the methods), of course would make those generals surprised since they had always thought of him as someone who used his beauty to seduce Xi Lei King.

JQ: Hearing Duke Ming say that, it seems that our training methods is still inadequate, please enlighten us Duke Ming.

Feng Ming's situation right now was like having the enemy surround him on all four directions, like standing in fire and sitting on coal. At this moment, he finally understood Lu Dan's hidden intention.

Since he is now at this point, even if Feng Ming knew that it'll be of an advantage to Lu Dan, he couldn't help but had to use his brains to come up with a military strategy/method to create some hardships for Jun Qing.

FM: How would I dare to criticize that your training methods is not good.

Feng Ming gave a dashing smile, simply stood up and walked towards the center like a supermodel displaying his fashion clothes, he continued.

FM: If we look at this from a small aspect, then naturally we can train and discipline a good group of soldiers. But these are nothing truly spectacular, the methods for great training is to create an army that is incomparable.

A set of footsteps filled with confidence and pride walked towards Jun Qing, Feng Ming paused, lowered his head to examine closely the face that had no change of expression from Jun Qing.

FM: Jun Ling Si, do you want to know, what it means to have superior training strategy?

JQ: I am curious to hear.

FM: That is...the system.

JQ: The system? (Jun Qing raised his eyebrows)

All the other generals held their breaths waiting for the answer and looked at each other.

FM: That's right, the system. Everyone here understands that a soldier's morale is very important, but you don't know how to make an army's morale rise to its peak. Reward, punishment, training, every day repeating the same thing, teaching the basic skills is not the key, the key is to reform the military system so that each soldier strive to do his best and continue to motivate himself.

"Duke Ming has said a lot of things, but you have not reached the important point." Suddenly, a voice traveled forth from behind. Though the sound was delicate, but it had a cold tone similar to Jun Qing. "The problem about soldier's morale, we already know about that. But the system that Duke Ming talked about, what kind of system is it really, that can boost one's morale and can it really allow Dong Fan's military's strength to reach its highest level? These questions, Duke Ming have not said a single word to clearly answer them. To be invincible in the world...it sounds more like smooth words that an ignorant person would boast about."

Someone had pointed out a few problems to Feng Ming and he made several faces inside his mind, Feng Ming turned around towards the direction of the questioner. That person had a special position, a young and only general to stand behind Jun Qing, the clothing similar to the rest, skin fair white, and a handsome face, however it's a pity that the person's eyes revealed a sense of coldness. Just looking at that person, one would understand how much strict military styled training was put through at a young age, definitely not someone who would joke around at ease.

Jun Qing noticed that Feng Ming was carefully examining the person behind him so he said: "This is my daughter, Jun Ting, she is Dong Fan's 13th military assistant."

So it is a female, no wonder her voice was delicate and appearance is very handsome.

FM: Greetings Miss Jun Ting. (Feng Ming gave her a friendly smile).

JT: This is a military meeting, Duke Ming, please address me as 13th military assistant. The problem I have brought up, I still request Duke Ming to answer please.

FM: Describing the system is very easy, however to create a system that will be useful is not an easy task. 13th Military Assistant (13MA) just asked me a very pertinent question, can my method make a soldier's morale reach his highest point? If I were to explain my method right now, everyone here will not be able to see the actual result, therefore, I want a better way to prove my method so that everyone can see.

CY: What way do you have?

What Chang Yen brought up was in fact something that all the other generals were curious about. As someone who have been together with the two people of extreme intelligence in psychological warfare like Rong Tian and Lu Dan, Feng Ming naturally would learned a bit on using psychological strategy.

FM: Actions speak louder than words, the outcome will prove whether or not there's result. If you really want to witness my method of training soldiers, I request Jun Ling Si to give me a group of soldiers, who will be solely trained by me. After three months, Jun Ling Si can inspect my training. I will not ask for a large number of people, you don't have to worry Jun Ling Si, just 100 people is enough.

Since that will be the end of three months period, if he were to die then he'll die. For now, he just need to hold a small portion of the soldiers in his hand, have a better chance to connect with more people than the opportunity of him leaving here would increase, at the point if he were to use a bit of manipulation at the right time, then who would know whether these 100 people will help him escape.

JQ: Only 100 people, how can we see the results of training? I will send 3000 soldiers of 13MA for Duke Ming. Although Duke Ming wanted to solely take charge of the training, 13MA will assist you. Other than that, we cannot wait until after three months to see the results, we will inspect once every month, then we'll use 3000 soldiers in my military division to become opponents with 13MA's soldiers, using 3x the result to measure Duke Ming's training method.

13th Military Assistant, she will be assisting? Every month there will be an inspection?

Feng Ming's face turned pale.

Jun Ting didn't care much for Feng Ming's pale face, and only replied.

JT: I understand the orders, I will put in my all to help assist Duke Ming in his training.

JQ: Excellent, today's discussion will end right here, meeting adjourned.

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When Jun Qing stood up, the rest of the generals stood up as well and made their salute with Jun Qing.

All of them continued to discuss as they exit the room, before leaving they all made glances at Duke Ming, who boast himself. Chang Yen seemed as if he got something to say to Jun Qing so he tailed off behind.

Feng Ming stood in the middle of the hall, currently regretting his words that he said without thinking. It was supposed to be three months before his secrets would be reveal, but now it seemed like his secrets will be reveal within one month.

His shoulder suddenly felt a touch of someone's hand, he turned around, what appeared in front of him was beautiful face, but it didn't not have the gentle kindness that a young lady should have.

JT: The 13th military division is currently in the field of grass behind the mountain of the inner palace to do training. Every day, the training will start at 3am, Duke Ming has to remember to wake up early tomorrow.

FM: Three AM? (Feng Ming widened his eyes and spoke as if whining)

JT: As a soldier, one cannot be lazy. At 3am, we'll be taking attendance, no matter if you're a soldier or general; those who are tardy with receive 20 whippings. (After saying that, she left.)

This daughter of the Jun family, along with those old hags are so similar, a figure that is not easy to please.

The next day when the sky was still pitch black, Feng Ming was disturbed by the female attendants to wake up.

"13th Military Assistant sent someone here, hurry and wake up Duke Ming."

The winter wind was freezing and having someone pull him from under the warm blankets was very pitiful. Feng Ming continuously sighed, ever since before coming to this ancient period, there were very few people who dare to disturb his happy slumber. There was never a time that when Rong Tian left to take care of national affairs, would he not softly leave the bed to allow Feng Ming to enjoy his happy dream.

The person coming to escort him was not Jun Ting herself, but she sent 12 other guys of great strength.

"The Military Assistant has already left for training duty, request Duke Ming to immediately come over there...Generals who are in charge of the training will need to wear the General uniform, and luckily the Military Assistant has already prepared it. At the moment, Duke Ming does not have an official title, so first, please wear this uniform that the Military Assistant had provided." After finishing speaking, there was a person standing behind who immediately brought forth a set of clothing for Feng Ming.

FM: Can I not wear it?

"No. Those who are in violation of the provisions of not wearing the military clothing will be given 20 whippings."

FM: Alright. Alright. Can I wear this coat, but not change into the inside outfit. (Who would in their right mind during this cold winter take off their warm and soft outfit to change into something stiff and tight like that?)

“No, these are rules of the military, you cannot be wasteful. You must wear the full uniform, if you dare to neglect these rules, 20 whippings.”

FM: Oh heavens, do all of you belong to the Nazis?! Then how about at least this cloak...

“There is already a cloak with the embroidery of the Military Assistant sign.” He pointed towards the direction of where the uniform was placed at, the cloak that was there did not seem a bit warm at all.

“Duke Ming, please do not dawdle any longer, if you are tardy, according to the military rules, you will receive...”

FM: 20 whippings, I understand.

It seems that this Jun Ting really want to use the whip to beat Duke Ming for once. Feng Ming of course didn't want her to have this opportunity.

Without any other choice, those that are under the cover will have to bow down. Feng Ming knew that if he were to commit anything wrong then those that look down upon him would clap their hands in happiness.

After weighing the consequences, Feng Ming decided to follow an old saying, knowing when to be patient because a small leak can sink a large ship. Feng Ming obediently went back to his room, throwing aside the warm, pretty clothing and wearing on the military uniform that is both stiff and tight.

Slowly running in the snow and falling about for close to one hour, he finally came to the field of grass behind the inner palace. The trees and grass had already dried up about half, there was only a large patch of grass area that didn't have much snow, and perhaps the soldiers had already clear the area.

When Feng Ming ran to the area, he already heard the shouting of those soldiers training. In the middle of the night, the sun had not even risen up, it was supposed to be the time to sleep comfortably.

Feng Ming let out a sighed, he was still regretting about not having enough sleep.

Jun Ting brought over several soldiers and horses and stopped in front of Feng Ming.

JT: Duke Ming had arrived late. Within the 13th military division, if a general did not follow the rules, he will be punished just like a regular soldier. Since today is the first time Duke Ming has made this offense, and is also a special guest of the Great King sent here to attend military duties, remember well that the next offense will be 20 whippings. Tomorrow, I will not send anyone to come escort you, so if you continue to come late, you will receive another 20 whippings along with today's offense for a total of 40 whippings. Duke Ming will need to be careful, for when the time comes don't blame me for not reminding you.

This early in the morning and he got lectured, Feng Ming had to endure a whole lengthy reprimand, but he didn't talk back, just blinked his eyes and didn't put in his opinion about it.

FM: Where is 13th Military Assistant planning on heading to?

JT: Of course inspecting the result of training. Request that Duke Ming also come along, it would also be a good time to hear a bit about Duke Ming's system for training troops. (Looking over at the soldiers behind her) Hand Duke Ming a horse.

A soldier from behind immediately jumped down from the horse and handed the rein to Feng Ming, and then went onto another horse to ride with another soldier.

Feng Ming received the rein and climbed up the horse. Just when he was sitting steadily on top, the horse without any reason suddenly made a loud yelping sound, stomped its front feet twice and lifted itself upward.

Jun Ting was startled: "Duke Ming, be careful!"

Feng Ming had learned horseback riding from Rong Tian, so his skill was not of a novice. When he felt sudden movement, he immediately held onto the rein tightly and quickly turned his body to jump off the horse. When his back just touch the ground, suddenly appearing in front of him were the horse's hoofs, yelling beside his ears was Jun Ting: "Watch out!"

Feng Ming was quick and rolled himself away, narrowly escaping the dangerous hoofs that could have dug out his intestines, causing him to sweat cold sweat.

At this time, the soldiers had already surrounded the horse and calmed it down.

Feng Ming stood up from the ground and patted his chest.

FM: That was dangerous, thank you 13th Military Assistant for your verbal reminder.

Even Jun Ting was a bit surprised with Feng Ming's skill.

JT: It's great that you're alright, Duke Ming. I have received order from my father that I need to protect Duke Ming. I can't believe that the first day, something like this would happen. (She had a bit of suspicion, turned around and ordered the soldiers) Everyone back away!

Jun Ting climbed down the horse and grabbed onto the rein of the horse that ran wild. Her eyebrows narrowed, placed her hand underneath the saddle, after inspecting for awhile, she noticed something and removed her hand.

Jun Ting opened up her fist and within her palm was a sharp stone with a drop of blood. When Feng Ming sat on the saddle, his weight pressed down creating pain for the horse, causing it to run wild.

Jun Ting looked closely at the soldiers, her eyes filled with anger: "What is this?"

All of the soldiers bow down without saying anything; one of them gave Feng Ming an angry look, which was the person who gave that horse to Feng Ming.

JT: Placing a rock underneath the saddle to harm the person riding it, is this the action within our Jun's army? What audacity! (Jun Ting angrily threw the rock onto the ground and call out

for the sergeant in charge of punishment) Jun Xiao will receive 40 whips, the others will receive 20, execute the order immediately.

The punishment was executed right at the spot, no need to go to a special location. The sergeant brought the blood stained dark military whip and ordered the soldiers to kneel in order to receive their punishment.

Those soldiers were not scared/timid one bit; they took off their uniform, exposing their back and waited for the whipping.

Feng Ming was afraid of these scenes, even more nervous than the soldiers themselves. He couldn't help looking towards Jun Ting's direction.

FM: 13th MA, nothing happened to me...

JT: Pleading for the ones being punished will also be punished themselves. Duke Ming will need to understand this before opening your mouth. (She glanced over at Feng Ming)

Is that even so? Feng Ming was stunned; he could only swallow back the words he was planning on saying.

The first person to receive punishment was a soldier named Jun Xiao, perhaps 90% is the mastermind since he could have been the person to place the stone inside the saddle before handing the rein to Feng Ming.

The sergeant's whipping was very harsh, not a bit of hesitation or mercy, the whipping sound was loud and strike accurately on the soldier's back, leaving bloody wounds. Jun Xiao was very resilient, clenching his teeth and not making a single sound.

Feng Ming's heart was racing about; he couldn't help but shouted out: "Stop!" After telling the sergeant to stop his whipping, he turned over to Jun Ting: "You Jun, don't you know about human rights?"

JT: (surprised) What are human rights?

Feng Ming was speechless; people in this world were uncivilized. They took a young woman, used her as sacrifice and her family members felt that was something honorable. To explain about human rights during this kind of era is the same nonsense as explaining about DNA.

Feng Ming stared and thought for a long time, then revealed a bright smile of innocence.

FM: Please don't misunderstand Military Assistant. I wasn't trying to plead, I just have a question. The incident about putting a stone inside the saddle is obviously done by one person, so why not punish only Jun Xiao instead of punishing all of them?

JT: Does Duke Ming believe that all of them are unaware about this? (she laughed coldly) Those who know about it share the same punishment according to the military discipline, whether or not they take direct action. As long as they are aware of the crime but don't report it to their superior then they will receive half the punishment of the main culprit.

FM: You keep talking about military discipline, but who is the one deciding these military discipline? Just a bit of wrongdoing and getting punished for it, how many different punishments are there and do they even write each one specifically for each incident? (If he had free time, he must take a look carefully and fully familiarized himself with the crime/punishment book, just in case he committed a crime and don't even know it.)

JT: The military discipline belongs to 13th army, is there a need for changes? I am the 13th military assistant, as long as I felt the need to put out a punishment, then it will be carried out, isn't all military division like that?

FM: So what you are saying is...there is no specific legal provision?

JT: How is that possible?

The sergeant holding the whip interrupted: "Military Assistant, do we need to continue the punishment?"

FM: Hold on!

Feng Ming didn't really wanted to plead on behalf of these soldiers, but he was worried for his pure eyes and weak heart, thinking for some time, he suddenly thought of a way.

FM: 13th MA, the method of using these whips to whip the soldiers is not exciting enough. In fact, punishment is also a type of training. I've come up with a plan. How about we change the system of training by starting with these soldiers?

The soldiers that have been kneeling on the ground look up.

Jun Ting was a bit surprised; her father had told her to allow Feng Ming to practice his so-call unique training method. Since Feng Ming had made this request, she cannot refuse him, also she wanted to witness what awesome technique Feng Ming had up his sleeves. Keeping her calm, she asked the soldiers: "Do you accept Duke Ming's punishment?"

"With MA's order, we must comply."

JT: If you have agreed, then you have to obey the orders, you can't have a change of mind later. If you still have any other objections, I will report it to my father, and expel you out of the Jun's army. Duke Ming, please state your intended method for punishment.

Feng Ming coughed twice and stood before them. Their bare backs were exposed and although all of them lean like stiff iron, they were beginning to shiver, so he wasn't in a haste to mention his method yet.

FM: All of you, put on your clothes first.

The soldiers heard his sincere voice and they all felt surprised, lifting their heads towards Feng Ming, then over at Jun Ting and then lowered their heads, not daring to move an inch.

JT: Are you all deaf? Follow Feng Ming's command. The order has been given, you cannot hesitate.

The soldiers obediently put on their clothes.

FM: Jun Xiao is the one that placed the stone, this is no doubt, but who was the one that suggested this? Point that person out. (His eyes looked at each soldiers' face)

All of these soldiers belonged to the Jun's army and had grown up together. They were very close like brothers, so how can they hear one sentence of Feng Ming and implicate someone, they all avoided Feng Ming's eye contact.

JX: The person who placed the stone was me, the one who suggested it was also me.

Feng Ming glanced over at him and smiled.

FM: Is that so? There's a saying that the law will not punish the mass, however, if we let the situation go then it may lead to corruption. I don't want to punish everyone, but I also cannot punish no one. Therefore, I will choose one person out of all of you to receive the punishment.

JX: Duke Ming doesn't need to select, I accept all the responsibility and consequences that follows.

"Jun Xiao has been injured. The person who instigated it was me." Another soldier stepped forward.

"Jun Cheng, hurry and step back, this has nothing to do with you."

The young man named Jun Cheng was a bit under 20 years old, he looked at Jun Xiao with wide eyes and lowered his voice in anger: "Why are you still trying to act tough, haven't you had enough whips yet?"

"It's me."

"No, it's me."

All of them stepped forward at once, wanting to carry all the responsibility onto themselves.

JT: Everyone step down, let Duke Ming be the judge! According to Duke Ming, who are you planning to choose to receive the punishment?

FM: Of course it would be interesting to randomly choose someone. I heard all of the soldiers in the Jun's army are all skilled in martial arts, killing opponents with bravery, ten times stronger than the average soldier. I want each one of you to choose your own opponent within the regular pool of soldiers.

"Opponent? You want use to fight with ordinary soldiers?" One of the soldiers asked.

FM: You're wrong. It's one on one teaching/training.

"Teaching?" All of them were surprised.

FM: I will give you ten days, each one of you must strive hard to teach your skills to the ordinary soldier of your choosing. During these ten days, that soldier is your student. Ten days later, your student will represent you (the teacher of them), on a one on one battle. They will fight against

each other and whoever wins, I will punish his teacher. The relationship between all of you is very good, you probably don't want your friend to receive the punishment, so if you want to receive the punishment yourself, then you will have to teach your student very well.

After finishing, Feng Ming stood next to the horse that is now calm, patted his back and climb up onto it. He turned his head and said to Jun Ting.

FM: 13th MA, ten days later, within your army, you will have an additional 10 elite soldiers. Wouldn't that be fun? Actually, when training soldiers, repeating the same skills over and over again, and using whipping as punishment is useless. Starting tomorrow, I will not come here, I have to stay within the palace to focus on other ways to plan good military regulations for the 13th military division. Ten days later, I will come on time to inspect the result of their teaching. In addition, it allows you to look at my specific plan. I will return now, no need to escort me, goodbye.

Jun Ting didn't stop him, she signal her other subordinates. They followed behind Feng Ming and said: "13th MA has ordered, all of us will escort Duke Ming back to the palace."

Feng Ming knew that he cannot have all the freedom he wanted, but he didn't keep it in mind, being surrounded by them, he eventually returned back to the palace.

He didn't imagine that Lu Dan was waiting for him inside, seeing Feng Ming walking in, catching his breath, Lu Dan stood up and chuckled.

LD: Lu Dan is mistaken again. Duke Ming never had been trapped by the little kitten of the Jun's family.

FM: Wait a bit for me.

Feng Ming rushed inside his room, removed the ugly armor uniform off, and allowed the maids changed his clothes to the soft inner palace robes. At that point he was able to let out a sigh of relief, he came back out to the living room, sat himself next to the fire, placing his hands out to absorb the warmth of the fire mantle.

FM: Advisor sure is happy, everyone in the military division sees me as an enemy. Just the first day, there was someone that placed a stone inside my saddle.

LD: Jun Ting allowed you leave that easily? She is the only daughter of Jun Qing, and perhaps the future Jun Ling Si. Ever since she was young, Jun Qing had trained her strictly, using military training/practice as the family law. Therefore, even though Jun Ting is a female, her action within the army is very ruthless. For Duke Ming to use this opportunity to not take revenge and punish the soldier, we can see your vision. Although it is a small thing, Duke Ming has allowed us to see your attitude about the military training. If because of this situation, Jun Ting has a positive view about Duke Ming, then it will be of great advantage for us. This young woman is very tough, very ambitious and extremely difficult to seduce.

Feng Ming was a bit scared by Lu Dan's smirked and surprisingly said.

FM: Advisor isn't telling me to use the Beauty Scheme, are you? If you want to form an alliance with Jun Qing and Jun Ting, then I believe Advisor would do a better job. In this world, whose appearance would be as beautiful as yours?

Feng Ming was just saying those words without thinking much, but he never imagined Lu Dan to have such an unexpected response.

LD: Duke Ming, do you really think that I haven't tried it already? If I could gain Jun Qing's support, then why would I still need to battle against the priestesses all these years? Even one glance, Jun Ting would not even look at me once, don't you think I was a little ashamed?

FM: Dong Fan King, he...

LD: The Great King will not disagree. As long as it is my decision, the Great King will not object.

Feng Ming thought: Could it be he dares not to object?

This is something personal between the two of them, for an outsider like him he shouldn't involve himself with it.

FM: Whatever Advisor's method is in taking advantage of Jun Qing is none of my business. I just want to remind you, that the beauty scheme is something that I don't know how to use.

LD: Duke Ming, don't be scared, how could Lu Dan dare to force Duke Ming? (I guess Lu Dan forgot about what he did several chapters ago...lol)

While they were in the middle of talking, a maid came in to report to them: "Jun Ling Si had ordered a soldier here, stating that there was an urgent matter, request Duke Ming to immediately come to the military meeting hall."

FM: (face became pale) I was just let go by the daughter and now the father comes by. This isn't good, it seems like they are planning to use the fatigue tactic, everyday tossing me back and forth like a clueless donkey, walking in the snow, and making me wear that uncomfortable uniform. I'm afraid that before the three months are up, I would have passed out before then.

LD: (laughed) Duke Ming is really hilarious. If Jun Ling Si personally sent his men to request for your audience, I'm afraid it isn't something small. I would suggest you to leave quickly. The military meeting for Dong Fan military division is very important, if you're not there within the next 30 drum strikes, you will get whipped.

Feng Ming's eyes widen, jumped straight up.

FM: Why does all the military division of Dong Fan always speak of punishment, just a little mistake and you use force? Not good, I still have to walk quickly a bit to be safe. (Feeling resentful, Feng Ming went back to his room, quickly changed back to the military uniform, and followed the soldier towards the meeting hall.)

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Huffing and puffing, Feng Ming finally reached the meeting hall. There was in fact a guard who was beating the drums outside; luckily each drum strike was only hit every moment. When Feng Ming arrived he just heard the 29th strike.

Entering the meeting hall, all the generals had already gathered. Feng Ming was again the last person to arrive, and so all eyes fell upon him once again. This aspect, he was surprisingly thick skinned, since he didn't arrive late and didn't do anything wrong. He sat back in the seat position that he sat before.

FM: Coming here in a hurry, what is the urgent matter that you need to hold an emergency meeting?

Jun Qing coughed once and nodded at Chang Yen. Chang Yen stood up and spoke in a low tone voice.

CY: Half an hour ago, the troops at the city gates discovered a spy attempting to sneak into the barracks. On that person's body hid an inner palace secret message with several words of Kingdom Bei Qi, within the message, we concluded that Bei Qi had another spy that infiltrated within our troops. This matter is very important, therefore, Jun Ling Si had ordered for an emergency meeting on this matter.

"Did we interrogated the spy and captured any intelligence/news?" One general asked.

Chang Yen shook his head: "That spy saw that he was going to be captured alive so he immediately swallowed a poison pill and committed suicide." Chang Yen was in charge of the troops that were posted outside the city gates so when a spy was discovered, his facial expression was not very easy to look at.

JT: General Chang Yen, you have mentioned that the secret message had words in it, what were they? What is the purpose of the spy and are there any other clues?

"There is a clue, but it isn't a clue."

Jun Ting surprisingly asked: "What do you mean, there's a clue, but it isn't a clue?"

CY: The secret message on the spy, the words mentioned about a person who infiltrated within the troops of Dong Fan, but the entirety of it, which troops that person is hidden in, which positions, how to contact, none of that is known. However, before the spy died, he wanted to tear up a letter. Luckily, we were able to stop before then and took it from him.

One general named Yan Pin was shocked and asked: "That letter must be very important, what is written inside?"

CY: There were a lot of strokes on it, but we were unable to read and understand it.

Everyone was surprised.

JQ: According to my guesses, what is written inside the letter must be from an ancient text, perhaps Bei Qi had recently used coded words. We gathered everyone here so that we can figure out a way, see if anyone of you could read the inside message of it. I had already ordered

someone to copy the contents within the message, please look over carefully at the copy that is handed out to you.

One guard behind Chang Yan carried out the copies and handed one to each person. Holding the copy in their hands, they cannot decipher the strange handwriting ligatures and wrinkled their brows.

Feng Ming received his copy and just when he opened it up, his whole body was shaken, and luckily everyone's attention was on their own copy, so no one noticed Feng Ming's expression. Feng Ming immediately withdraw his shocked expression, calmed his nerves down, lowered his head and looked at the written letter in his hands.

Long long, short short, short short, long long, there were dots and dashes. Jun Qing and all the other generals of Dong Fan could not have the ability to understand this language. Even for someone with modern eyes, they will need to have a basic knowledge of Morse code in order to decipher it.

This was something he only taught Rong Tian in this world; this was a secret between the two of them, there were only a few times that they actually use it to speak out their inner thoughts.

Rong Tian, Rong Tian is really here! Feng Ming's hands trembled, he bit his lower lips, he really wanted to stand up and shouted out loudly.

That bastard, he actually dared to openly pass message inside the inner palace of Dong Fan, but overall it was worthy of praises.

So Feng Ming deciphered the message and within the message was:

"I am near you, wait for me. X3 "

This was probably the most emotional letter Feng Ming had ever received from anyone so far.

His heart was like it was suddenly squeezed tightly, filled with pain but yet happiness. When Feng Ming looked over the three words: "wait for me," a sudden shock ran straight up to his brain, almost causing him to cry out. While holding tightly onto the letter, he heard Jun Ting's voice traveling towards him: "Duke Ming, you seemed very emotional, have you figured out some clues?"

Feng Ming quickly lifted his head up and noticed that all eyes were now focused on him, he silently wanted to yell out. Knowing that Rong Tian had passed a message through, his whole body was overly excited, and his brain was more active ten times.

FM: 13th MA sure has free time to examine my expression, have you finished reading the letter already and noticed some sort of clue?

Jun Ting softly "hu" a sound, of course she didn't figure anything out and lost face when Feng Ming asked her.

Jun Qing: Duke Ming's eyes are a bit red, your hands trembled, it doesn't look like the kind of expression someone would give if he don't know the hidden message in the letter. Duke Ming isn't planning on hiding something are you?

FM: Jun Ling Si's observant skills are very impressive. In the beginning I wasn't planning on saying anything, but if this matter has anything to do with Dong Fan, then I honestly tell you, as a way to repay my deepest gratitude to the Great King. I don't dare to lie, but this type of language I have seen it before, a long time ago.

CY: What is written in the letter?

Feng Ming shrugged his shoulders.

FM: Although I have seen it before, I still don't know how to decipher this ancient text. My master had told me once that these writings are what the Gods use to directly contact the mortals. Usually, the writings will appear on the mountain peaks, or on a stone cliff, prophesying a series of confidential events/changes of the kingdom.

It seems like he had acquired the bad habit of Rong Tian, his lying continued to increase every day, the more he say them and more fluent they are, from a young honest lad, he had fallen and now became the treacherous Duke Ming of Xi Lei.

"The Gods directly communicate with the mortals?"

"Written down all confidential matters?"

Dong Fan is a kingdom that wholeheartedly believe in the Gods, so using the lie was like an automatic target with numerous straight shots.

JQ: (raised his eyebrows) Even if they are the words of the Gods, then there must be someone who could decipher the text, if not then how can the Gods relay these confidential events for the people?

This problem, Feng Ming had already thought of.

FM: You're right, there is someone who can understand this language.

"Who?"

FM: My master, Sun Zi. With my master's ability and background, if Jun Ling Si is suspicious of my words, then you can go and ask Advisor.

CY: Duke Ming's master, can we invite him to Dong Fan? I don't know why, but I feel that what is written in this letter is a huge matter related to the fate of Dong Fan. It might also be the main reason why Bei Qi sent their spy to relay it to the spy in Dong Fan.

Feng Ming was laughing inside so hard that it hurts.

FM: My master's whereabouts, I have already told Advisor, he is doing his best to invite him down the mountain. However, my master is someone similar to a fairy, like to wander about in different places, so it would not be easy to find him.

Feng Ming eventually came back to his quarters; he was chuckling on his way back for he finally received news of Rong Tian. A few teardrops fell from his eyes, and he was afraid if anyone was following him would have discovered it and report it to Lu Dan so he tried to recover his emotional state and told his female attendants: "This morning I was woken up by Jun Ting's men, so I didn't receive enough sleep. Let me wash up first and sleep for a bit, once I wake up I'll eat the dinner meal."

After washing up, the female attendants excused themselves. He climbed onto the bed and thought about Rong Tian a bit, and again tears fell down his face. From the beginning, Feng Ming was constantly worrying that he would meet with disaster, but now that he knew that he's alright, Feng Ming thought about how he heartlessly caused him to worry for no reason. He gritted his teeth and thought that the next time he meets Rong Tian, how will he take his revenge.

One of the female attendants came by a bit later and said: "Duke Ming, the dinner meal has been prepared."

After napping for a bit, Feng Ming didn't want to wake up nor eat dinner, he continued to dream of Rong Tian. However, the next morning, the maids came by to disturb his sleep again, so Feng Ming was angry.

FM: Didn't I already tell Jun Ting that within ten days I won't be coming to the training camp? Tell the person she sent over that I need to concentrate on writing training methods, to create a new system that is the privilege that her father had given me, if they are not satisfied then go talk to her father, or go find the Advisor!

"Duke Ming, the person that is looking for Duke Ming does not belong to 13th MA's men."

"The Advisor said that there is something important, requested Duke Ming to the quarter of the Great King's inner palace.

FM: Advisor, he has something important?

"Advisor said, he had invited Duke Ming's master to the inner palace of Dong Fan."

Feng Ming suddenly rose straight up from his bed: "Say that one more time?"

"Your master, Sun Zi is currently at the quarters."

Feng Ming's face was completely shocked. Is this a mistake, he could even invite his master? Once again early in the morning, he had to leave his warm bed, but this time, Feng Ming was willing to because he was curious to know what kind of daring person would pretend to be Sun Zi. Of course, these people in this ancient period wouldn't know the impressiveness of Sun Zi. To pretend to be Duke Ming's master, this situation is already extremely dangerous, and if he is discovered he could be beheaded.

This person, could it be Rong Tian? It can't be, Lu Dan already had seen Rong Tian before, and he is also well-versed in faking disguises. Even if Rong Tian were to be disguised by a professional, he cannot hide it all from Lu Dan. If his guesses are correct, then it can't be Lie Er,

or Rong Hu, or any other officials in the palace because they were all seen by Lu Dan and cannot easily pass through Lu Dan's eyes. From where did Lu Dan find this fake Sun Zi? Could it be...an enemy of Lu Dan who had secretly inquired about Feng Ming and sent someone to disguise as Sun Zi to enter the inner palace, scheming to take advantage of something? If that's so then they are very bold because Feng Ming could easily expose them whenever.

Anyhow, if it is truly an enemy of Lu Dan, then should he expose them or not? Feng Ming's attitude towards Lu Dan right now is neither an enemy nor an ally. Feng Ming entered the quarters, he saw Lu Dan's bright face in front of him.

LD: Duke Ming had made me waited long enough. This is truly the best news we've received, I've sent people to the mountain that Duke Ming had mentioned to look around for quite some time, after looking everywhere they still could not find your master, just as they were about to head back without any result, but eventually they were able to meet. At first, your master didn't want to come, but after hearing about your whereabouts within the inner palace of Dong Fan, your master agreed to come here.

Lu Dan and Feng Ming stepped inside the room; it was rare to see Lu Dan's bright face.

FM: Advisor, why are you so sure that this person is my master?

LD: Duke Ming, don't worry. How can I be easily fooled? I just spoke with your master about the Arts of War and your master is indeed an intelligent person, comparing to Duke Ming's explanation, your master's is more clear and thorough.

Feng Ming was surprised.

LD: Your master is inside. (Lu Dan lifted the curtains and walked inside) We have let Master Sun waited for a long time, your disciple Feng Ming has arrived.

Feng Ming stepped a foot inside, and just when his eyes made contact, he let out a shocking sound, like as if he was hit on the head.

The person inside the room was noble and kind, even though the clothing was plain, but it cannot hide the nobility status that everyone admired. Along with the intimate smile when looking at Feng Ming, there was a bit of scolding.

"My disciple Feng Ming, how come you have not come up the mountains to greet me? If I didn't purposely look for you, I'm afraid that even 10 years later, you would not remember your master."

Feng Ming was stunned for a bit until he finally regained his mind and walked up facing his "master" just like a disciple who had been wandering outside for a long time and now finally met his master again, his eyes reddened, his knees kneel down and started crying.

FM: Master...master, your disciple is not filial, making you at an old age to come meet me in this palace! Master!

Even Lu Dan, seeing this scene between teacher and disciple, couldn't help but be emotional for them. This fake "Sun Zi", was the only person within the inner palace of Xi Lei who Lu Dan had

never met or seen a portrait of. Many people outside never thought that this person would ever have an impact on Xi Lei, and that person would be Empress Dowager who others fail to notice. How could Lu Dan expect that the person hidden within the inner palace of Xi Lei, furthest from national affairs, Empress Dowager who should have been controlled by Tong Er, was found up in the mountains?

Empress Dowager completely changed her regular styled of clothing, wearing a simple outfit, but still keeping an impressive aura within the inner palace of Dong Fan. She slowly bent down and stroke Feng Ming's head.

ED: My good disciple, Advisor had told me a bit about your situation. Don't be afraid, even though Jun Ling Si holds military power, it is not something that can't be dealt with.

Empress Dowager was familiar with two different reigns of Xi Lei, many times standing within the middle of the complicated battle for throne and survived. She protected her only son in becoming the Great King of Xi Lei.

LD: (sighed) I didn't imagine that Duke Ming's master was actually a woman, which is a great surprise.

Feng Ming respectfully helped Empress Dowager onto a chair and stood behind her.

FM: (smiled) About this, Advisor is wrong. Underestimating a woman can easily suffer a great deal.

Perhaps it's best to say that the woman hidden within the inner palace of Xi Lei, who no one knows about, is the most powerful person (to be wary of).

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END OF VOLUME 6

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